

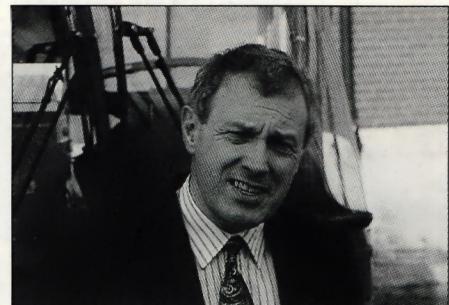
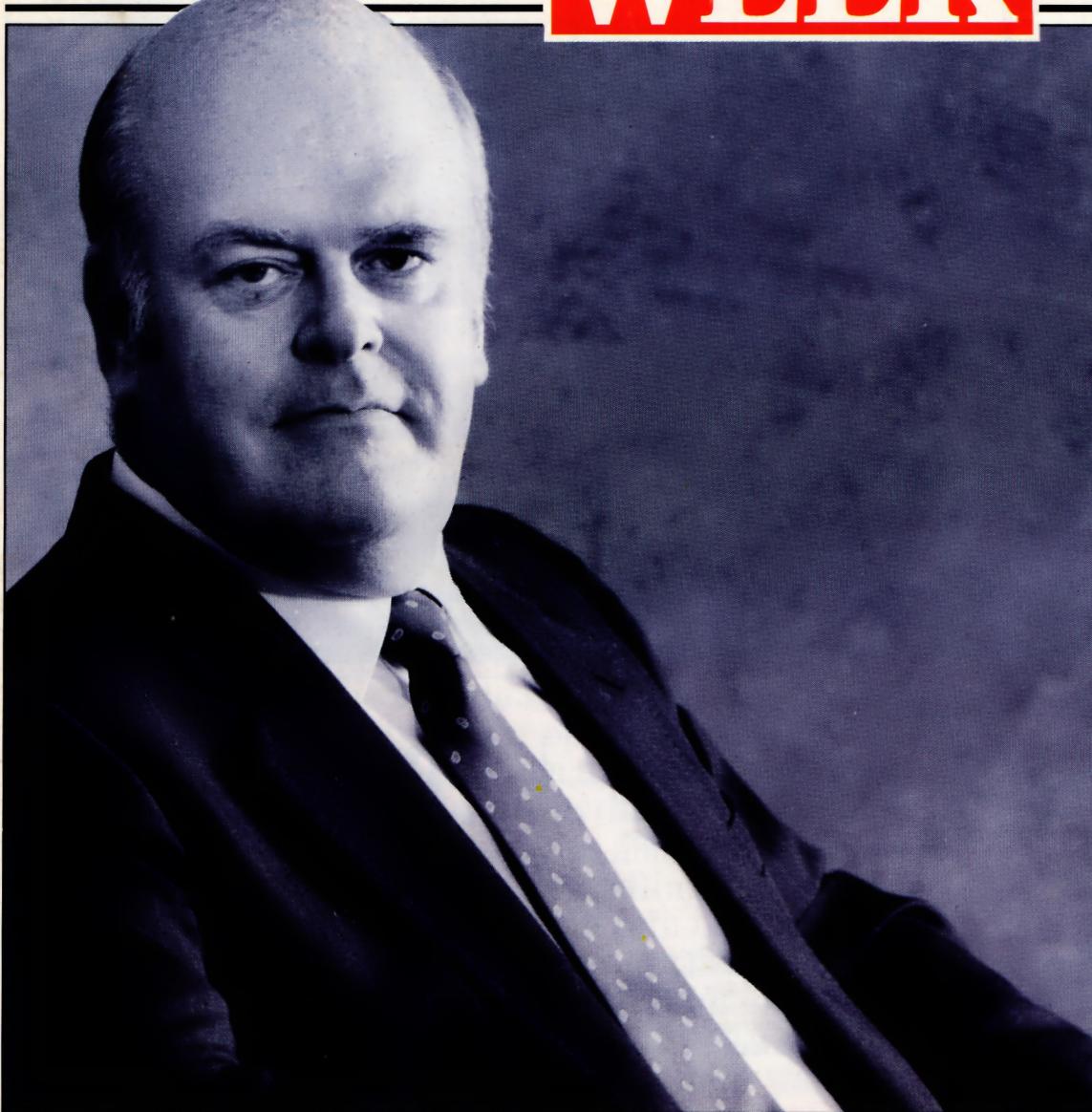
COACH AND BUS

WEEK

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

ISSUE 11

MAY 2 1992



STEERING A NEW COURSE AT MTL

How former Navy dockyard manager, Peter Coombes, is bringing Merseybus back from the brink.....Page 27-29

SUN AND RAIN AT BRIGHTON

Tellings Golden Miller wins first major prize since 1973, but dispute mars driver of the year competitionPage 14



ROUTEMASTERS TAKE ON MINIS

Who's winning the bus battle in Southend, 30-year-old RMs or new minibuses ...Page 23 & 24

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"THAT'LL DO NICELY"

Chairman McEnhill works dramatic £8m turnaround in 6 months at National Express



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N116 CITYLINER



N122 SKYLINER



DAF 1987 DKVL CAETANO PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 51 recliners, red/grey moquette, rear sunken toilet, continental entrance/exit door, tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, drinks machine, power entrance door, wired for TV/video, TELMA, ABS anti-lock braking, cream/blue. M.O.T. APRIL 1993

BOVA 1988 B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M, 49 recliners, double glazed tinted windows, roller blinds, webasto, centre sunken toilet, continental door, courier, cool box, drinks machine, TELMA white. M.O.T. MARCH 1993

BOVA 1985 FUTURA FHD 12.280 INTEGRAL 12M, 49/53 str, red moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet, continental entrance/exit door, tinted double glazing, drivers sleeping berth, TELMA, drinks machine, coolbox, white/blue/red. M.O.T. JAN 1993

DAF 1987 DKVL CAETANO ALGARVE 12M, 49 recliners, duo brown moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental entrance/exit door, courier seat, tinted side windows, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, wired TV/video, white/duo blue. M.O.T. APRIL 1993

DAF 1985 SB2300 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 53 recliners, power entrance door, white/duo blue. M.O.T. MARCH 1993

LAG 1988 PANORAMIC INTEGRAL 12M, DAF Powered, 49 recliners, centre sunken toilet, continental door, courier, cool box, webasto, TELMA, sleeping berth, drinks machine, double glazing, power door, wired TV/video, white/orange/blue. M.O.T. APRIL 1993

BOVA 1988 B10M GL JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P599 12M, 53 recliners, grey/red moquette, courier seat, double glazed side windows, white/primrose/blue. CHOICE OF TWO M.O.T. JAN 1993

BOVA 1987 B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 49/53 recliners, grey moquette, demountable centre sunken toilet, continental door, driver's berth, aircraft style lockers to hatracks, wired TV/video, white. M.O.T. SEPT 1992

DAF 1982 DKTL PLAXTON SUPREME 12M, 51 recliners red moquette, tinted side windows, curtains, power entrance door, white. M.O.T. MAY 1992

VOLVO 1985 B10M JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P50 12M, 51 recliners, rear toilet, courier, tinted windows, curtains, drinks machine, wired TV/video, green/orange/yellow. M.O.T. FEB 1993

DAF 1986 DKFL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 49/53 recliners, grey/red moquette, demountable rear sunken toilet, continental exit door, courier seat, curtains, power entrance door, wired for TV/video, cream/duo blue. M.O.T. FEB 1993

BOVA 1986 FUTURA FHD 12.280 INTEGRAL 12M, 49/53 recliners, demountable centre toilet, continental door, berth, AIR CONDITIONING, all white. M.O.T. APRIL 1992

LEYLAND 1987 TIGER 260 DUPE 340 12M, 50 recliners, rear toilet, courier, power door, servery with fridge/drinks machine, tinted windows, wired TV/video, white/orange/black. M.O.T. JAN 1993

BOVA 1988 FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M, 49/53 recliners, duo red moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet + continental entrance/exit door, courier seat, double glazed side windows, power entrance door, drinks machine, duo brown/orange. M.O.T. MARCH 1992

TRADE DESCRIPTIONS ACT; In detailing these used saloon coaches we have quoted the year of registration and not necessarily the model or year of manufacture.

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Traditionally many coach operators have bought new vehicles on the spur of the moment. As a modern executive coach costs up £150,000 that may seem a surprisingly impetuous capital outlay. But there have been very good reasons for making such major purchasing decisions in that way.

In healthy markets, dealers have kept a reasonable - some would say dangerously high - level of stock in their yards. The expectation of actually selling some of it has been enough to make the stocking costs worth while. A good stock of vehicles allows operators to look and drive before buying. More importantly, if every major dealer has similarly high levels of stock, it allows operators to play one off against the other.

Dealers' warnings that vehicle prices will rise have more than a ring of truth about them

Leaving purchase decisions to the last moment also allows operators to be sure that they have work for the vehicle before they buy it. Given the proven fragility of tour operators and the increasing pressure on them to secure best rates, that is understandable, but perhaps short sighted.

The general consensus among beleaguered manufacturers and dealers huddling in coaches to shelter from the cold wind and rain in Brighton last week, is that those dealing days are over.

To misappropriate a well-used phrase, they would say that wouldn't they? Yes, they would, and they have in the past. But this time their warnings have more than a ring of truth about them.

The UK coach market is now at an all-time low, especially in relation to the European market. There is less manufacturing capacity available and only one coachbuilder still largely dependent on the British market.

Continental based coachbuilders can keep their factories busy building left-hand-drive models, on which they can achieve reasonable profit margins. They would then only need to supply right-hand-drive models when they have a confirmed order representing profitable business.

If this is the trend, there is only one way prices can go.

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COACH AND BUS WEEK ENDING 2 MAY 1992

■ London sightseeing bus operator Brian Maybury was the last to know the decision of the Secretary of State for Transport in turning down his appeal against the traffic commissioner. Amid his claims that he is being victimised in the ongoing row, the ALPASSO organisation representing him announces a voluntary scheme to appease City of Westminster traffic chiefs.

■ Scottish bus operator Murray Shepherd said unfair tactics by Lothian Region Transport have boxed him in on new services, and has complained to the OFT. But success with tendered school contracts will see the former Stevensons of Uttoxeter operations manager building his fleet by two double-decks.

■ York park-and-ride contracts have gone to independents for less than £100 a day, despite revenue being collected by the city council. One operator claimed one of the hidden extras was a bonus paid for additional passengers carried during 1992. Another said his contract had been marginally costed because vehicles were employed on school contracts and Sunday excursion programmes, making Saturday the only slack day.

■ Gilbert Kinch looks set to take on Midland Fox again later this year when his contractual agreement runs out. With his wife and partner, Janet, he has taken the fight in recent months to Nottingham and the local municipal. Withdrawal of one route in Nottingham last week is being seen as preparation for a renewed onslaught in Leicester this October.

COACH AND BUS EVENTS:

- TAS seminar: Concessionary Fares and Ticketing. May 6, Birmingham. Tel: 0772 204988.
- Third Vintage Bus and Commercial Vehicle Rally. May 10, Gateshead MetroCentre. Tel: 091 493 2046.
- Coach Tourism Council AGM. May 10, Stakis Hotel Dartford. Tel: 0602 732260.
- UITP Conference. Public Transport: Security and Environment. May 11-13, Paris.
- IRTE: 23rd Annual Conference and Display. May 14&15, Telford. 071 589 3744.

■ COACH

WA ups profit to £3.7 million

THE Leisure and Holidays Division of Barr & Wallace Arnold Trust Plc claims to be the first coach holiday operator to have achieved year round operation - running for all 52 weeks of 1991. The division increased turnover by 12.5 per cent to £66.133 million compared to 1990, but as an indication of the tough times facing all parts of the industry, increased profits by only 2.1 per cent to £3.702 million.

Thanks to the Gulf war, the year started with extremely low bookings for the European programme, but a dramatic increase in the summer saw a 25 per

cent boost in customer numbers for the year as a whole. Carrying on the British programme showed a modest increase of three per cent.

The company maintained its policy of a three year coach life, and took delivery of 58 new units - mostly Plaxton Volvos - during the year. The division also invested in a new computer system to cope with the greater number of passengers.

For the second year running, the division won two awards; best coach operator from Travel Weekly and best domestic

tour operator in the BTA marketing awards.

Wallace Arnold Travel opened five new travel shops, bringing the number of retail outlets in the division to 23.

The company's three hotels, in the Isle of Wight, Exmouth and Torquay all made a significant increase in operating profit.

The trust as a whole, which is active in the motor trade and fuel distribution as well as leisure and holidays, saw its pre-tax profit fall by 4.5 per cent to £4.3 million, while turnover declined 3.7 per cent to £229.5 million.

■ COACH

Super-high Transliner may come to the UK

CARLTON PSV, the sole UK Neoplan dealer, is testing the water with a super-high version of its budget priced all-singing Neoplan, the Transliner.

The 3.2-metre high Transliner was launched

last-year as a £125,000 contender in the premium coach market. Only one of the two prototypes found a buyer - Ebdons of Sidcup. Although Carlton PSV is currently owned by National Express, the other coach, an

Expressliner clone, has failed to boost lacklustre UK sales.

Nevertheless Neoplan claims that the Berlin-built Transliner met with immediate worldwide success. The latest variant, the N316 SHD was shown at last weekend's Brighton rally in left-hand drive. Carlton PSV says a right-hand drive version will be available on the British market - subject to demand.

At a height of 3.6 metre, with 12 cubic metres of luggage space, the new coach is designed to overcome operator resistance to the normal height version. Standard spec 49-seat vehicles will be priced from £129,500 with Scania or DAF power and a £3,500 premium buys Mercedes V8 power. A high-spec package upgrades the interior for £7,500, but double-glazing will not be possible with existing UK weight regs.



Low and high Transliners head to head

CBW

■ COACH

Nat Ex back in the black

NATIONAL Express Group Ltd has reported a strong return to profitability in its first six months since restructuring. Group pretax profit for the latter half of 1991 was £3.6 million, addressing a 1990 loss of £4.2 million.

Chairman and chief executive, Ray McEnhill, said that loss-making activities had been eliminated and the core express coach business had shown a substantial turnaround.

However, he emphasised that group performance was strongly seasonal and the period covered by the accounts of the new group is disproportionately profitable compared with the year as a whole.

Group sales for the 24 weeks amounted to £56.1 million with other operating income boosting turnover to £58.4 million, which resulted in £1.9 million profit after

tax. Net assets totalled £11.5 million.

Restructuring occurred in June last year when the current National Express Group was formed by a venture capital syndicate led by ECI Ventures together with Drawlane. The £10.25 million deal with the original 1988 management buy-out team gave the banks - ECI, Hendersons Ventures, County NatWest, Eagle Star and Bank of Boston - 75 percent and Drawlane 25 percent. Four months later the purchase of Speedlink from Drawlane took the total investment to £11.5 million.

The group has since disposed of its stakes in joint venture coach operating companies and consolidated its remaining operation of coaches on National Express contracts under the Express Travel banner. Local bus companies acquired were transferred to Drawlane, and the group

intends to dispose of its interest in Carlton PSV, the Rotherham-based coach dealership.

Speculation currently surrounds the future of Carlton PSV. According to industry sources at least three potential buyers, including a management buyout plan and bids from key industry players, are waiting in the wings for the Neoplan distributor.

"The new group has made a good start," said Mr McEnhill. "It is now soundly based financially, has made good progress in achieving necessary organisational changes, and is stable and well established in its market place.

"There remains much work to be done. Equally, we perceive many exciting and accessible opportunities."

Mr McEnhill believes that anticipated growth in air traffic will contribute to improved future results.



National Express: £3.6 million profit

■ LRT

Now SYT proposes monorail

PROPOSALS for a city centre monorail system outlined by South Yorkshire Transport managing director, Peter Sephton, could be the best long term answer to clearing Sheffield's congested central streets.

Mr Sephton put the idea forward at last month's Traffic Commissioner's inquiry (*Coach and Bus Week*, April 25), but the idea had already been researched by the company for the Chamber of Commerce, and it is looking for private capital partners to get the scheme off the ground.

The system's backers say that a monorail would put shoppers in touch with all major areas of the city centre within minutes as

well as the railway station and stops on the Supertram network.

Mr Sephton said: "Much of the system would be raised off the ground, be unaffected by street congestion, pollution free and would give the city an up-market national profile."

SYT is anxious to stress that a monorail would not negate the effect of Supertram, which is under construction, but believes that a substantial project could be built for about £25 million - a tenth of the cost of Supertram.

Sheffield City Council explored the monorail concept almost 20 years ago but the idea was eventually dropped. It is willing to look at plans again, but is waiting

for SYT to make the first moves.

Councillor Mike Buckley, the council's economic development chairman said: "The idea clearly has potential and, coming from one of the county's most experienced operators, has to be taken seriously."

• The Bus and Coach Council is setting up a working party to decide whether its brief should include other methods of urban transport. With bus operators such as SYT, GM Buses and Badgerline involved with various forms of guided bus and light transit in different ways, the move is seen by many within the industry as a logical step from the well received Buses Mean Business campaign.



"I THINK PERHAPS THE GUIDED BUSES WERE A SIMPLER IDEA, PETER"

■ THE Public Transport Information Unit warns that Britain could lose its free concessionary fare schemes altogether as pressure mounts on local authority finances. Only London, Merseyside and the West Midlands offers a free bus pass, with the rest charging flat fares. Costs of running concessionary schemes have risen 50 percent, allowing for inflation, since deregulation in 1986. The PTE areas alone paid £170 million for concessionary schemes during '90/'91.

■ DAF Bus has more than doubled the size of its assembly plant in Eindhoven by buying adjoining buildings. DAF expects an upturn in sales in 1992 and the extra space will be used for expansion of chassis construction and the storage of finished products.

■ TWO London hospital bus services operated by Richmond Council and run by London Buslines are to be run under contract to London Transport by Westlink this week. The new LT routes R61 and R62, replacing the Richmond Hospital Bus and Teddington Hospital Bus, will be wheelchair-accessible. Financial support from Richmond Borough, the health authority and West Middlesex Hospital is being maintained.

■ PRODUCTION gremlins in the April 25 issue of Coach and Bus Week meant that Grey Green managing director John Pycroft was quoted as saying he was worried about deregulation in London because, following deregulation in the provinces, passenger numbers were down 16 per cent and passenger mileage down 19 per cent. In fact, Mr Pycroft said bus mileage is up 19 per cent following deregulation, so buses are travelling further to carry fewer passengers. We're sorry for any confusion.

■ COACH AND BUS

Best is second-best

THE return of the country's premier coach rally to Brighton was marred by a dispute which snatched the coveted 1992 Driver of the Year trophy from the hands of Peter Best just minutes after the official presentation by Bus and Coach Council president, Graham Smith.

Penalty points during the controversial driving test final, held in heavy rain,



Madeira Drive action

swung the award in favour of Tony Head from Reliance Coaches based near Peterborough, but a temporary breakdown in communication coupled with a tight schedule caused the embarrassing mistake.

Chief rally organiser, Paul Cousins, has promised an official enquiry into the confusion. He told *Coach and Bus Week*: "I feel very sorry for both drivers, but all I can do is apologise." Peter Best of band-bus operator, Best Coaches, took the top coach trophy as consolation and his father, Alec, claimed the veteran driver title.

The rally was back a Brighton after three years, in the hands of the original organisers, having been staged at Southampton. Its return to the Sussex seaside town was welcomed by operators though the weather dampened some of the spectator enthusiasm.

For the full story, see page 14.



Peter Best shrugs off his disappointment

■ COACH

Coach Tourism AGM at EuroDisney

THE icing on the cake of this year's Coach Tourism Council annual meeting on Sunday, May 10 is a trip to EuroDisney.

After members have heard about the progress the CTC has made this year - including the spring highlight when Bread's Ma Boswell, Jean Boht, coached into Birmingham city centre on the CTC roadshow coach (CBW issue 8, April 11) - a coachload will be leaving the Stakis Country Court Hotel at Dartford for France.

The CTC annual meeting in 1991 was also linked to EuroDisney, when UK sales manager Tom Allen stepped aboard one of Catamaran Cruisers' London passenger vessels to be greeted with searching questions from CTC members. This time, the resort itself will be

offering the answers.

Members will stay overnight in one of EuroDisney's own hotels, and have a full day to explore the show so far.

The CTC says it welcomes new members - £100 for coach operators or £250 for industry suppliers - aboard the trip. There is a £25 administration fee for the educational trip but it is sponsored heavily by EuroDisney, P & O Ferries, Bennets Coaches and Stakis Hotels.

Membership enquiries should go to Derrick Alsop, Tel: 0602 732260. Members can book places on the EuroDisney trip through Margaret Palmer, of David Palmer Coaches, The Travel Office, Wakefield Road, Normanton, W. Yorks WF6 2BT.

■ COACH

Clarkes of Tredegar rises from Hills' ashes

FORMER Hills of Tredegar general manager Bill Clarke is celebrating the first anniversary of his own business in the Welsh town.

The shock crash of the Hills business convinced Mr Clarke it was time to set up on his own. A year down the line, his fleet has grown from four to seven vehicles and now encompasses both local contracts and a summer incoming tour programme with tour giant Globus Gateway.

"I am quite pleased with the way things have gone since we started in April 1991," Mr Clarke told CBW. "When we began, we had

four Leopards on local work. After a full financial year, we have now turned in a small profit."

Clarke's Coaches have a leased site behind the Ford main agent at Sirhowy Bridge, Tredegar. The fleet is liveried either in Clarke's own colours - basic white with a two-tone blue stripe - or livery dedicated to Globus in the case of its three B10M Plaxton 3500s.

"We've got a little room for growth," said Mr Clarke. "But I don't anticipate going beyond ten vehicles. The bigger you are, the harder it gets."

CBW

■ COACH

Test for open-top scheme

ALPASSO says it has reached an agreement with its members and with City of Westminster on a voluntary sightseeing bus system which would iron out congestion problems.

The association's chair, Peter Newman, said CoW would now be monitoring this summer's scheme and he was confident that they would find it acceptable.

"City of Westminster has agreed to set up a joint committee to check the progress of the new system," he told CBW. "We are hoping they will use our scheme as a model for their own plans, to be announced in November," he said.

The system sees the City area split up between the ALPASSO member operators. Citirama takes the stops in Trafalgar Square and lower Regent Street West; London Sightseeing gets lower Regent Street East and Marble Arch; London Pride serves Coventry Street and upper Regent Street; and Blue Triangle will pick up in The Strand and Haymarket.

Mr Newman explained that CoW would not be applying its own scheme until the start of the 1993 season, but would be watching the progress of the ALPASSO compromise.

■ BUS

London routes could be revised

LONDON Transport has proposed a major revision of bus routes in the centre of the capital. Some longer east-west routes are to be divided in the interests of improved reliability in the face of increasing traffic congestion, and the projected revisions are aimed at matching the needs of present day passengers, whose travel patterns have changed substantially over

■ COACH

Sightseeing bus 'victim' speaks out

AFTER the loss of a lucrative open-top stop by Brian Maybury's London Sightseeing Tours and the curtailment of another, the Dorset-based entrepreneur is claiming he is being victimised.

LST was refused renewal of its licensed stop last October, and appealed against the traffic commissioner's decision. But in a bizarre situation, the decision of the Secretary of State for Transport to refuse even an appeal hearing was made known to London Coaches and several others... but not Mr Maybury. Faced with this fact, an officer at the Department of Transport confirmed that a decision had been made, but refused even then to discuss the outcome with LST's solicitor, Barry Prior at Wedlake Saint.

The loss of the stop is an additional problem faced by LST. After 18 months' wait for a decision on his plans to run open-toppers on weekdays from the apex of Oxford Street, at 140 Park Lane, Mr Maybury has been told his buses pose an access problem with local offices. He is now faced with weekend and bank holiday working only.

"City of Westminster Council is driving tourists

out of London," said Mr Maybury, chairman and managing director of LST. "It is trying to move us because it alleges we interfere with London Coaches' operation. We are harrassed by everybody.

"We have been refused membership of the London Tourist Board and the information centres won't give our name to enquiring tourists because we don't use Blue Badge Guides or taped commentary. As for City of Westminster, they simply don't believe in free enterprise unless your name is Sainsbury."

Mr Maybury said the sightseeing bus industry in London is becoming a "carve-up." The Association of London Sightseeing Operators, ALPASSO, had

devised a plan to split up the stops: "We've got to keep in with the City of Westminster," he said.

"We are all on probation, and if we don't toe the line, they'll slap a section 9 traffic control order on all of us."

He added that the latest body blow would cost his company a great deal of money, despite the trouble he had gone to, installing continental doors and converting buses to cause the minimum inconvenience to traffic. The use of the Park Lane stop still relied on the goodwill of CoW, who had now installed a sliding gate across the entrance to the stop. Access would be limited to anyone who had a key to the lock, said Mr Maybury.



LST - refused renewal

■ DESPITE the total absence of subsidy from GM Passenger Transport Authority, ten local operators have registered commercial services on Bank Holiday Monday, following a similar exercise on Good Friday and Easter Monday. GM Buses and Ribble are joined by eight local independents, plus four major companies that run into Greater Manchester from outside

■ SEATING manufacturer Richards & Shaw (Trim) Ltd has been awarded BS5750 Part II. The company says it is the first seating manufacturer to achieve the quality assurance standard.

per cent increase on all fares, the Caldaire companies have raised just one fare from 35p to 40p.

Riding managing director, Mike Hunter, said the company realised how price sensitive the market was. "Every passenger we keep during the recession will be with us for the next 20 years," he said.

Mr Hunter said the company was continuing to get its costs down and was hoping for a 3.5 per cent wage award. "We have found that most operators in this area have followed our lead and are following our fare scales."

After over 15 years on a common countryside fare scale, West Riding refused to follow Yorkshire Rider's Gulf War surcharge 18 months ago. Its new fare

■ LOTHIAN Regional Council says bus casualties have risen in the last five years... but points out that far and away the majority are elderly. Launching its new road safety plan, LRC said it aims to reach Government targets by cutting a third from the accidents statistics by the year 2000. In its area, 179 of the casualties in a total of 428 involved people over 65. Around 20 percent of all bus users are over retirement age. Only 71 of the casualties were under 24 years old.

the years. Improved access to the main line rail stations of central London is another aim of the changes, which are designed to use current resources more effectively. LT says the new arrangements will also provide an simplified and more easily-remembered route structure.

Principal routes affected by the changes are: 6, 8, 9, 15, 15B, 25, 76, 502, and 513. Four

new route numbers would be introduced: 23, 26, 98 and 521. Routes 15B and 26 will be operated by driver-only buses, together with evening services on route 15.

Separate proposals have been put forward by London Buses for changes to a number of Night Bus services, which are likely to take place concurrently.

With building work associated with the

construction of the Jubilee Line extension, bus stopping arrangements at Waterloo rail station are to be modified and rationalised. As far as is possible, common stops would be provided for the group of routes serving Fleet Street, Stamford Street and Holborn.

The proposed changes are now subject to public consultation.

CBW

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Sales in 1992 and the extra space will be used for expansion of chassis construction and the storage of finished products.

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North south fares divide

CALDAIRE Holdings subsidiaries West Riding of Wakefield and Yorkshire Woollen of Dewsbury have created a north-south divide in West Yorkshire by not following the latest round of fare increases.

Unlike its northern neighbours Yorkshire Rider and Blazefield subsidiaries Keighley & District, and Harrogate & District, which implemented a general five per cent increase on all fares, the Calderdale companies have raised just one fare from 35p to 40p.

Riding managing director, Mike Hunter, said the company realised how price sensitive the market was. "Every passenger we keep during the recession will be with us for the next 20 years," he said.

Mr Hunter said the company was continuing to get its costs down and was hoping for a 3.5 per cent wage award. "We have found that most operators in this area have followed our lead and are following our fare scales."

After over 15 years on a common countryside fare scale, West Riding refused to follow Yorkshire Rider's Gulf War surcharge 18 months ago. Its new fare levels are identical to those of Rider and Blazefield before the current increase.

EXTRACT MISSING

■ BUS

Bournemouth gets minibus service

A SMALL independent has launched a minibus service in Bournemouth. George Pearson, who was one of the founders of the Hospital Express service from Poole to Christchurch in early post-deregulation days, has started a daytime route

linking Kinson and Bournemouth town centre via Walldown and Ashley Road.

Mr Pearson is using one of the 16-seat Sherpas from his Minitrips Coaches concern on the hourly route, which is marketed under the Blue & White brand name,

and this is joined by a second vehicle in the afternoon peak hours to catch schools business.

Mr Pearson said: "Although we are keeping our fares low to encourage passengers, we do not intend to antagonise other operators."

He said he was not shadowing other operators' services. "The service is doing better than I thought it would. On the first day I thought we'd be lucky to get four passengers, but we carried 17, and it's been going up ever since."

■ BUS

Snags fails to stop Dublin high-frequency minibuses

DUBLIN'S high-frequency minibus operation was launched last week after a series of snags, including a threatened strike, were ironed out (Coach and Bus Week, April 25).

Initial patronage is claimed to be encouraging on the 83 service to Kimmage,

where three double deckers on a 35/40 minute frequency have been replaced by eight minibuses on a 7/8 minute headway.

Dublin Bus managing director, Bob Montgomery, said patronage had risen in line with the number of buses provided: "With lower costs,

we expect the service performance to improve substantially."

Mr Montgomery hinted that the loss-making service might even turn in a small return once patronage had settled down: "The service is better for the customers - there are 22 new jobs created



Minibuses replace deckers at Dublin Bus

and we are using vehicles which have come out of exist-

ing resources and haven't cost us an extra penny." **CBW**

■ BUS

Buses only in Dales?

VISITORS to the Yorkshire Dales National Park could be forced to leave their cars outside and take buses as the National Park committee tries to control traffic volume.

The committee has asked for a report to be prepared on the whole issue of transport in the Dales.

County councillor Derek Smallwood said: "We should take traffic management measures to make people use public transport."

Although there was general agreement at the meeting that the use of cars should be discouraged, some members also voiced worries about buses.

Anthony Abrahams said: "The roads are not designed for cars, but they are definitely not designed for buses."

However, county councillor, Nigel Watson, said this problem could be solved by using minibuses.

The National Park has agreed to contribute £750 to ensure the summer operation of the bus link between Darlington, Richmond, Leyburn and Hawes.

■ BUS

Five hurt in crash

FIVE passengers sustained minor injuries in a collision between two buses operated by rivals Lincolnshire Road Car and municipal Grimsby Cleethorpes Transport.

A Humberside Police spokesperson said that the collision occurred in Grimsby's Brighouse between the GCT Daimler Fleetline and the Road Car Bristol VR, which were both travelling in the same direction when the accident occurred. Neither driver was hurt, but five passengers, including a woman who was nine months pregnant, were taken to hospital with minor injuries or shock.

EXTRACT MISSING

■ BUS

West Riding going all midi



Wakefield is getting nine MetroRiders

■ BUS

Complaint made over unruly pupils

UNRULY behaviour by pupils on school buses in the north east has led to Cleveland County Council officers making a formal complaint to councillors.

The report outlines unruly behaviour by children, including

opening emergency doors, throwing missiles from and at vehicles and spitting out of buses. Council officers urged councillors to write to the governors of schools where the problem was at its worst as a first step to solving the problem.

If difficulties continue, troublemakers could be banned from school buses. Other possible solutions include the introduction of boarding passes, closer school supervision or even cancelling the buses altogether.

CBW

CALDAIRE Holdings subsidiary West Riding of Wakefield is converting the remainder of its city routes to midibus operation this month, with the arrival of nine long-wheelbase, wide-bodied Optare MetroRiders.

The 31 seaters will replace full-size buses on the Eastmoor to Alvethorpe route and double service frequencies, with the 12-minute headway on one

section going up to one every six minutes.

Managing director, Mike Hunter, said the 13 short MetroRiders introduced in January 1991 on the other city services were performing excellently.

"We had no hesitation in repeating our order. Downtime is minimal, passengers like them and they don't consume parts," he said.

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■ BUS

Bus station re-opened

MANCHESTER'S city centre Arndale Centre bus station reopened this week after nearly two weeks of closure for emergency remedial repairs.

The discovery of loose concrete on the underside of the station floor prompted the evacuation of a considerable number of Greater Manchester Buses and independent operator

north Manchester services to on-street bus stops in the vicinity.

Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive started repair work immediately and feels that the bus station is now completely safe after additional strengthening had been carried out on the floor. But the full extent of any structural problems has

not yet been identified, and further repair work may yet be necessary.

GMPTE deputy director general, Roger Hall, apologised for the inconvenience to passengers. "We will be monitoring the bus station closely for some time, and the possibility of a closure cannot be completely ruled out at this stage."

■ BUS



Red and White 811's replace Nationals

Wright bodies are right for Western

WESTERN Travel subsidiary Red & White has taken delivery of four Wright bodied Mercedes-Benz 811Ds for local service operations in Brecon and Ross-on-Wye, where they have replaced elderly Leyland Nationals.

Red & White engineering director, Peter

Johnson said: "We are using them on routes which no longer justified a bus the size of the National. With new and smaller vehicles, we are seeing worthwhile savings in maintenance costs, and passengers find a modern bus with soft interior trim a more attractive proposition too."

The Mercs are 33 seaters, and although they are the first Wright bodied vehicles for Red & White, they bring to 22 the number of Wright bodies supplied to the Western Travel group in the last six months.

The company is also the first in south Wales to take Wright bodied vehicles.

■ COACH

Face-lifted Van Hool on show



HUGHES DAF, the Cleckheaton-based coach dealership, has the first face-lifted Van Hool Alizee in the UK.

The £147,000 coach was the most expensive trade

exhibit at the Brighton coach rally last weekend.

It is based on top-of-the-range DAF SB3000 KS with 354 bhp engine and ZF eight-speed Easyshift gearbox.

■ BUS

Transit help for Romania

EMPLOYEE owned Cleveland Transit is raising money to bring a Romanian orphan to Cleveland for vital surgery.

The bus company is supporting the charity Convoy Aid to Romania and surgeon Fred Nash in their efforts to bring a child who needs correction for a cleft palate and plastic surgery to his hands and feet to the north east for treatment.

Traffic and marketing director for Cleveland Transit, Stephen Warnock-Smith, said: Money will be raised internally and externally. We have over 350

employees who are working together to raise donations."

To mark the first anniversary of the company going into employee ownership, the company will donate 10 per cent of the revenue raised from the sale of Transit Tripper unlimited travel tickets over the May Bank Holiday weekend to the fund.

Mr Warnock-Smith said: "As Cleveland's leading bus company, our business is to transport people daily through the area. It is therefore logical we should help with funds to transport this baby to Cleveland."

■ BUS

Co-operation keeps the wheels turning

EXETER-based Red Bus Services last week praised the co-operation of fellow operators after put almost the entire fleet out of action.

Overnight, someone broke into the operation's base, an engineering yard, and smashed 50 panes of glass. Every bus from Bristol

VR's to minibuses sustained damage in what was described as "systematic vandalism."

"It's possible this was the result of a grudge," said Red Bus owner Richard Holladay. "The only damage was smashed glass. Nothing was taken."

CBW

■ LIGHT RAIL

Metrolink starts city service ops

MANCHESTER'S Metrolink system started service operations in the city centre, slightly ahead of its revised schedule, with the opening of the street section from Victoria Station to the G-Mex Centre on Monday.

The opening follows the introduction of articulated trams in service from Bury to Victoria at the beginning of last month (*Coach and Bus Week*, April 11).

Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority has also concluded an agreement with Metrolink to allow rail passengers coming into Manchester from any station in the country to travel free on Metrolink through the city centre.

Further ticket inter-availability will mean that passengers with a Metrolink period pass will also be able to buy a PTE Buscard Extra, giving them unlimited travel



Metrolink - agreed rail passengers can travel free through city centre

on most buses in the area.

Councillor Jack Flanagan of Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority believed Greater

Manchester would benefit tremendously from the new transport links: "We would particularly like to thank the traders and businesses for

their tolerance and hope they will now reap the rewards, which improved access will undoubtedly bring."

■ COACH

First Plaxton 425 bought



Western Scottish 425 for Citylink service

MANAGEMENT-owned Western Scottish has bought the first re-engineered 425 integral from Plaxton.

One of the batch of 12 built by its former Lorraine subsidiary in France, the Plaxton 425 carried a list price of £113,750. Specification includes Cummins L10 engine coupled to an eight-speed manual ZF gearbox, 53 seats, centre toilet and ABS as standard.

Western, which has also bought the first Plaxton Premiere based on the 12-metre Dennis Javelin chassis, will use the 425 on its Stranraer to London express Citylink service.

Plaxton now says it has 100 Premiers and Excaliburs on the road. The first Excalibur to be sold to a small independent operator was shown at Brighton in the

colours of its new owner, Andersons of Horsforth, Leeds. Based on Volvo B10M it was fitted with 49 seats and centre toilet.

Wallace Arnold now has over 30 of its new Plaxton coaches on the road out of an order of 61, which is due to be completed by early June. The Shearings order for 30 Premiere 320s on Scania chassis for British tours and 10 air-conditioned 350 Premiers on Volvo for continental tours is now delivered. Parks of Hamilton has received 15 out of the 34 Volvos ordered - 10 Excalibur and 24 Premiere 350s.

Orders for smaller operators now going through the Scarborough factory include eight air conditioned Volvo Excaliburs for Flights of Birmingham.

■ LIGHT RAIL

Views sought on new LRT cars

TYNE and Wear Passenger Transport Executive, which is currently refurbishing its rapid transit Metrcars, has presented a prototype for public comments in a consultation exercise undertaken at St James Station this week.

The main feature of the refurbished car is a revised seating layout allowing better access for disabled passengers and making efficient use of standing space.

Additional storage space for luggage, pushchairs and shopping has been provided, with improved high visibility grab rails and handles.

The PTE is inviting views and suggestions from specially invited groups, as well as the general public. Comments are also being invited on a variety of internal colour schemes.

■ COACH

Beware of the magpie

COACH operators are warned - beware of the Folkestone Magpie. Wallace Arnold has lost the wipers off one coach and the headlamp unit off another. While at least one other company has suffered at the hands of an expert thief while parked up at a Folkestone hotel.

Wallace Arnold operations director, Stephen Barber, said: "It's obviously the work of an expert. The parts have been taken deliberately without any damage being done."

Tongue in cheek, Mr Barber suggested that someone must be assembling a Plaxton Paramount from a set of bits.

CBW



First two-door Dennis Lance

BUS

Selkent - new look

DENNIS chose Brighton to show the first example of the 16 two-door Walter Alexander-bodied Lances about to enter service with Bryan Constable's Selkent division of London Buses.

Fitted with just 39 seats, but, thanks largely to a mid-mounted people pen, capable of carrying 32 standees, the Lances will replace Routemasters on Selkent's 36B route. They will also be painted in a new livery of grey, black, white and red designed to give the company a distinctive identity in the run up to privatisation.

Mr Constable said: "Our

business objective is to reduce costs while avoiding London's previous custom of going to double-deck one-person operation which has often led to top-deck vandalism, graffiti and generally unsociable behaviour."

Dennis has now sold 44 Lances, including 24 to Kowloon Motor Bus and three to Eastbourne with 11.6-metre Wadham Stringer bodies. Standard Lance driveline is a 211bhp Cummins C-Series engine driving through a ZF 4HP500 gearbox with integral retarder.

COACH

Brighton rally is welcomed back

TELLINGS Golden Miller claimed coach of the year and Tony Head of Reliance Coaches won the disputed driver of the year accolade by the narrowest of margins at the first Brighton coach rally for three years.

Concours d'elegance judges struggled against persistent rain on the Sunday to single-out TGM's Van Hool-bodied Volvo as the rally's top coach from the 31 entrants. After drivers Roy Clark and Brian Rogers took the prized Coach of the Year trophy Steve Telling, TGM managing director, proudly claimed that the award was down to "team effort". Despite success at recent Southampton and Blackpool events, this is the first major rally prize for the Midland Fox owned company since Golden Miller won coach of the year in 1973.

Entry was down on last year's Southampton event,



The winning team

but the return to Madiera Drive after a three-year break was voted a big success. Chief organiser, Paul Cousins, told *Coach and Bus Week*: "I'm really pleased with the response from the coach operators and the trade. They were all glad to be back in the more relaxed atmosphere at Brighton."

However, Mr Cousins

confessed that the £9,000 event will fail to cover its costs. He said: "I could be out of profit, but I was determined to bring it back to Brighton no matter what it costs."

Rally Stalwart, John Fielder, suggested a bus section for next year to improve interest. He said: "Now the rally has come back it is here to stay and will continue to grow."

Mr Fielder praised Mr Cousins. "Considering it was his first time, Paul handled it very well."

Cyril Kenzie - an ever-present since the first rally in 1955 - endorsed the return to the old venue: "Although this is the worst weather in 38 years it's like being in the army and coming home. I vote it a success, well organised with this number of entries, but just imagine what it was like in its heyday with three times as many vehicles."

COACH

Short Javelin fills a niche in the market

THE first 10-metre Javelin coach was unveiled by Dennis at last weekend's Brighton Coach Rally.

It uses the same driveline as the 11 and 12-metre models, but in a chassis with a shorter wheelbase. According to Dennis, mounting the 240bhp Cummins engine just ahead of the rear axle, gives the 10-metre Javelin unrivalled luggage capacity.

"We see growing interest in 10-metre coaches," said Vernon Edwards, Dennis sales and marketing director. "And thanks to the Javelin's modular construction, it was a comparatively easy job to re-engineer the chassis to accept shorter bodywork. We recognise that the 10-metre coach is a specialist



Dennis and Berkhof side by side at Brighton

requirement and we wanted to be in that market niche as part of our strategy of providing a complete range of purpose-built bus and coach chassis."

The first completed coach shown at Brighton was fitted with Berkhof Excellence 1000 bodywork

and kitted out with 36 seats, tables, washroom and servery.

It had been bought by Midland Fox subsidiary, Tellings Golden Miller for its Sheenway fleet.

To that up-market specification, the vehicle costs £104,000.

CBW

THE 1992 UK COACH RALLY
ROLL OF HONOUR

COACH driver of the year - Tony Head of Reliance Coaches

Coaches 1992 Kassbohrer Setra Tornado S215

Top coach in class F - Ceder Coaches 1986 Plaxton/Bedford

Carlton PSV Sales trophy - Ebdon Coaches 1992 Neoplan Transliner

Jonckheere trophy - Coliseum Coaches Deauville/MAN 10.180

Plaxton trophy - Clarkes Coaches Plaxton Paramount /Volvo B10M

Top coach from Wales - Merlins Coaches 1992 Van Hool Acron

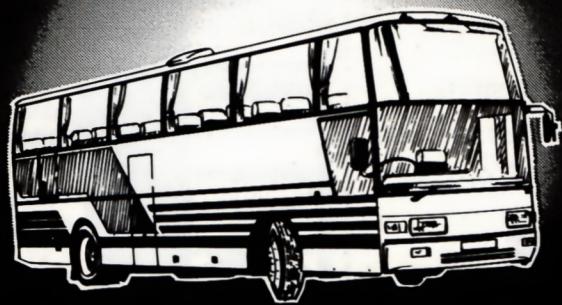
Highest marks on driver's quiz - Richard Osborne of Boon's Coaches

Driver with the longest PSV licence - Alec Best (1957) of Best Coaches

Smartest uniformed driver and courier - Travellers of Hounslow

Top Scania and top Berkhof - M & M Coaches.

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1983 DAF MB200 DKT. LAG Galaxy, 53 recliners, current MoT	£23,500
1983 MAN SR280, 46 seater, toilet & servery, current MoT	£22,000
1982 VOLVO JONCKHEERE BERMUDA, 49 seater, toilet, seats recovered	£25,000
1982 VOLVO B10M DUPLE GOLDLINER, 49 seater, toilet, current MoT	£21,000
1982 BRISTOL LHS PLAXTON SUPREME V, dual purpose doors, 33 seat, MoT April 1993, immaculate condition	£16,950
1981 VOLVO B58, 12m Duple Dominant, 53 seater, MoT October 1992	£19,000
1980 DAF PLAXTON 12m, 53 recliners, MoT 9th September 1992	£15,000
1979 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPLE DOMINANT, 53 retrimmed seats, MoT June 1992	£11,000
1979 VOLVO B58 DUPLE DOMINANT II, 49 E Type and courier, MoT July 1992	£15,000
1978 BEDFORD YMT VAN HOOL 300 LINE, 53 seater, new MoT	£4,950
1977 AEC PLAXTON, 53 seater	£5,750

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■ HONG KONG

Pressure mounts on CMB routes

CHINA Motor Bus is coming under increasing pressure to part with up to 25 of its franchised routes, according to industry sources in Hong Kong.

The commissioner and deputy secretary of transport are said to be holding secret meetings with the company as they attempt to implement the changes prescribed by the Transport Advisory Committee - including the ending of CMB's scheme of profit control (Coach and Bus Week, March 21).

Under the scheme, CMB is guaranteed a return on its assets, but this return is limited to 15 per cent. The

company has been accused of using the scheme to raise fares but only implementing a few improvements to its services.

The solution is seen as getting CMB to give up a mixture of profitable and loss making routes to another operator, introducing an element of competition but leaving CMB with a profitable business.

There is now considerable pressure on all sides to find a solution. CMB's franchise expires in August 1993, and the government is required to give the company 12 months notice of its intentions.

■ HONG KONG

More buses for airport

ANOTHER 290 buses, plus 700 taxis, will be needed in Hong Kong, if the construction of an express railway between the new airport at Chek Lap Kok and residential areas is delayed, according to transport secretary, Michael Leung Man-kin.

He said the vehicles would be needed in 1997, the year the airport is due to

open, if the rail link was not finished. The government would not allow the airport railway to be subsidised by passengers using existing services, and it would have to compete with other modes of transport. A further 150 airport coaches, 140 double decker buses and 700 taxis would be needed to meet the traffic demands of the first year.

■ BUS

How they cope in Copenhagen

THE Danes are great bus users... or so says a survey of 115,000 of Copenhagen's passengers. Honesty is a priority with the Danes, and despite the rigorous check, only 90 travellers were found without tickets. Those who had underpaid fares amounted to only a quarter of one percent of the sample. Copenhagen City and Regional Transport carry 320,000 people a day around the city.

■ COACH AND BUS

Buy up boost for Shepherd

THE former operations manager at Stevensons of Uttoxeter, Murray Shepherd, is expanding his bus operations in the Edinburgh area, and has complained to the Office of Fair Trading about the tactics of his competitor, Lothian Region Transport.

Shepherd has acquired the bus and coach business of Stewart of Dalkeith, with proprietor Bob Stewart concentrating on his Ford car dealership. The transaction expands Shepherd's fleet to 13 vehicles, which will be used on a mixture of commercial and contract work.

After leaving Stevensons, Mr Shepherd returned to his Edinburgh roots, and in September last year started operating between St Andrew Square in the city centre and Ongangs in the suburbs, paralleling Lothian Region Transport's route 16. This is a one-bus operation with

duplicates, and Mr Shepherd used two former SBG Leyland Leopard buses. A third Leopard was bought for the 10 service which started on April 20.

The Stewart vehicles include Volvo B10M and AEC Reliance coaches as well as Reliance and Leyland National service buses. The buses are used on the two-vehicle Cockpen-Dalkeith service, as well as local education contracts.

Shepherd is employing all existing Stewart road staff and mechanics, and the company's premises at Newton Grange will become the base of all Shepherd's activities. The green Stewart livery will be phased out in favour of Shepherd's red and cream and a new operating name is being considered.

Mr Shepherd was critical of Lothian Region Transport's response to his operation on Edinburgh service 10: "They have

allocated two costly Leyland Lynx to run immediately in front and behind me," he said.

"I have been totally boxed in since the service started on Monday, except when they mistakenly pursued one of the other Leopards on the 16 service.

"With just one bus on the service I'm only offering a 70 minute service, so for most of the time passengers have LRT's 12 minute frequency, then every 70 minutes three 10s arrive in quick succession."

A complaint about this has been made by Mr Shepherd to the OFT.

A further boost to Mr Shepherd's operation has come with the successful tendering for five out of six of Edinburgh area school contracts, previously held by Lothian. When the contracts start in August, Mr Shepherd will have added two double deckers to his fleet.

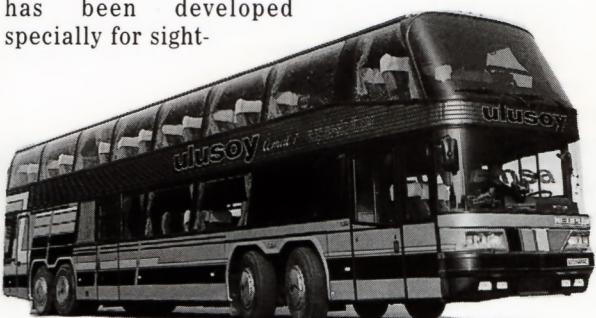
■ COACH

Neoplan's new plan

NEOPLAN says its reputation for innovation will be on display at the 54th IAA show in Hannover on May 9-17. On its biggest ever stand will be one of its biggest products - the Neoplan Megaliner N128/4.

This four-axle coach is a stretched version of the German company's Skyliner. It is claimed to offer new standards of space and ride in an European touring coach.

A fully-glazed decker has been developed specially for sight-



Neoplan's four-axle Megaliner



Metroliner has carbon fibre body

seeing tours - keeping Neoplan at the forefront of this type of vehicle design. It follows on from an earlier excursion into this market with a glass-roofed decker with fish-bone seats upstairs. Also on display will be the futuristic carbon-fibre bodied Metroliner N8012.

CBW

What a load of rubbish!

WITH the election over, employee buyouts are uppermost in local authority-owned bus company managements' minds, as the December deadline for remaining in the Local Authority Superannuation Fund approaches.

Nevertheless, suggestions that South Yorkshire Transport is preparing to evacuate its Meadowhall headquarters for less salubrious accommodation, are still strenuously dismissed as 'only one of the options'.

The fact that SYT is reducing its stores by selling bins from Meadowhall to one of its independent competitors is dismissed as 'a load of rubbish' by press spokesperson Steve Arnold.

Sheffield's operators seeing red

STILL on the subject of Sheffield, the city council's attempt to introduce regulation orders on bus operators backfired in a big way at the Traffic Commissioner's inquiry.

All the bus operators, and the Sheffield Passengers' Association for good measure, criticised the council's inactivity in the field of traffic management, particularly over the last five years, although those with long memories can recall similar problems albeit on a smaller scale occurring over ten years ago.

Why else would the traffic

lights at the junction of Haymarket and High Street show green for only 14 seconds, when buses stack up all the way down to the river as the cover photograph in issue 3 of this magazine shows?

Given that the predominantly private traffic crossing the same junction from Commercial Street gets more than three times as much green time, some mischievous pundits are advancing the conspiracy theory and suggesting that the council has deliberately stood by and allowed the problem to develop so that it can regulate bus services by 'the back door'!

Chris lands in hot water

CHRIS Palmer, DAF Bus's UK sales manager got himself into hot water last week - literally!

After a hard day's work, Chris turned his hand to a spot of DIY and went up to his loft to nail the floor down.

Unfortunately, with the very last nail of the day, Chris was off the mark and went straight into the hot water pipe.

'You wouldn't believe that wallpaper could hold so much water' he said after trying to stem the flow until help arrived, by plugging the leak with his finger as any good Dutch company employee would!

USED VEHICLE SELECTION



1988 (E) D.A.F. MB 230 DKFL — CAETANO ALGARVE

53 recliners, courier seat, power door, full height rear continental door, radio equipment, full soft trim side lockers.



1986 (C) BEDFORD YNV — PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200
52 seats, power door, saloon mounted rear toilet, servery, boxed/wired for video, radio.



1987 (D) D.A.F. SB 2300 DHS — DUPLE 340
57 recliners, power door, provision for centre toilet, centre continental door, radio equipment.



1982 (X) LEYLAND LEOPARD ZF — DUPLE DOMINANT II

53 seats, power door, Bristol Dome.



1982 (PP) MERCEDES 0303 — JONCKHEERE BERMUDA
49 recliners, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, centre continental door, driver's berth, power plug door, full soft trim.



1986 (D) D.A.F. SB 2300 DHS — CAETANO ALGARVE
49/53 recliners, courier seat, tinted double glazed windows, full draw curtains, centre-sunken toilet, driver's berth, wired for video and monitors, radio.

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No level playing field for the Single Market

RECENTLY I appealed for any operators who knew whether there was an equivalent in other EC countries of operator licensing, annual testing, spot checks and any authority comparable with the traffic commissioners, to write to me with details.

I did not expect sacks full of mail - but nor did I expect to receive a total absence of any communication whatsoever on this all-important topic.

The bored silence of the trade is, however, matched by officialdom. For I had written to the Department of Trade and Industry and to the Department of Transport seeking the same information.

The Merry Men of Marsham Street did at least tender a reply, even if it did not fully answer the questions posed. "We are not aware of any particular comparative studies of individual EC states in their approach to entry into the profession of road passenger transport or of the enforcement practices of member states. However, all EC members must comply with any council directives and implement them into their domestic legislation. The UK and, indeed, all member states, are fully committed to Europe and the achievement of a genuine single market."

I find it rather more than a little alarming that, with the Single Market due to be operative in little more than seven months time, no one appears to have tried to discover whether there is a level playing field of opportunity - far less to actually do something about rolling out the humps which clearly exist.

To put the matter in focus, EC Directives in force do require operators to be of good repute, have financial standing and be competent. It also requires the authorities in one Member State to inform other Member States if operators lose repute through convictions or if their authorisation to operate is withdrawn.

Superficially, the level playing field appears to be in place, but I am far from certain that the machinery is in gear to ensure that it will actually work.

Traffic commissioners in this country have told me that there is no formal way in which they are informed of operators' convictions - they glean their information from the trade press and even local newspaper court reports! Can we, therefore, really believe that a system that does not work nationally will function on an international basis?

But what is more fundamental is whether the (over?) importance attached in the UK to maintenance standards and the facilities therefore are mirrored throughout

equivalents from across the Channel.

Indeed, my oft-voiced view is that, given the excellent accident record of our industry in the UK, we are grossly over legislated, checked, monitored, controlled and disciplined.

It is really that which concerns me. For the fearful cost of this compliance may put us at a commercial disadvantage with our off-shore competitors who have one, simple test a year and then are left alone to get on with the job unless they attract convictions.

I am also concerned that operators who work in member states other than their country of origin (as in principle they will be free to do), will, in operator

peril, a continental coach will never have an immediate prohibition put on it in this country because the emergency stop or a bell push does not work, or because a bulb has failed, or because a mirror has been smashed.

Yet the UK operator cannot only expect to continue to be beset by such risks, but also can confidently look forward to having to re-prepare the vehicle to annual test standards; book it in, and take it to, a test station and (quite probably - as there is now legislative provision for it) actually pay a test fee to get the prohibition cleared!

Level playing field indeed! It is like playing football up a



Will other EC operators be subject to a level playing field in the Single Market?

the EC. As far as I am aware, some other EC Members only meet the minimum requirement - for an annual inspection of vehicles.

Although my evidence is somewhat anecdotal, I gather that in some countries this is not as stringent as our roadside spot-checks and certainly not done at a fully-equipped test centre and not conducted in the methodical way that our Testers' Manual sets out.

As for spot-checks, I do not think that there is even an equivalent word in the languages of some of our partners, far less any such activity.

I am not going to be alarmist and suggest that there is a possibility of this island being invaded by unsafe PSV

licensing terms, not be subject to the same controls as national operators.

For example, if a continental coach was found with a defect in this country, it would be useless for a Vehicle Examiner to write out a prohibition on a PG9 form - it would have no meaning in relation to a French, German or Italian operator licence.

The only available sanction, if the offence merited it, would be to impound the vehicle, arrest the driver and haul him before a magistrate. To avoid international repercussions some provision would have to be made for the passengers carried.

So, in reality, unless the danger was such that lives were really in

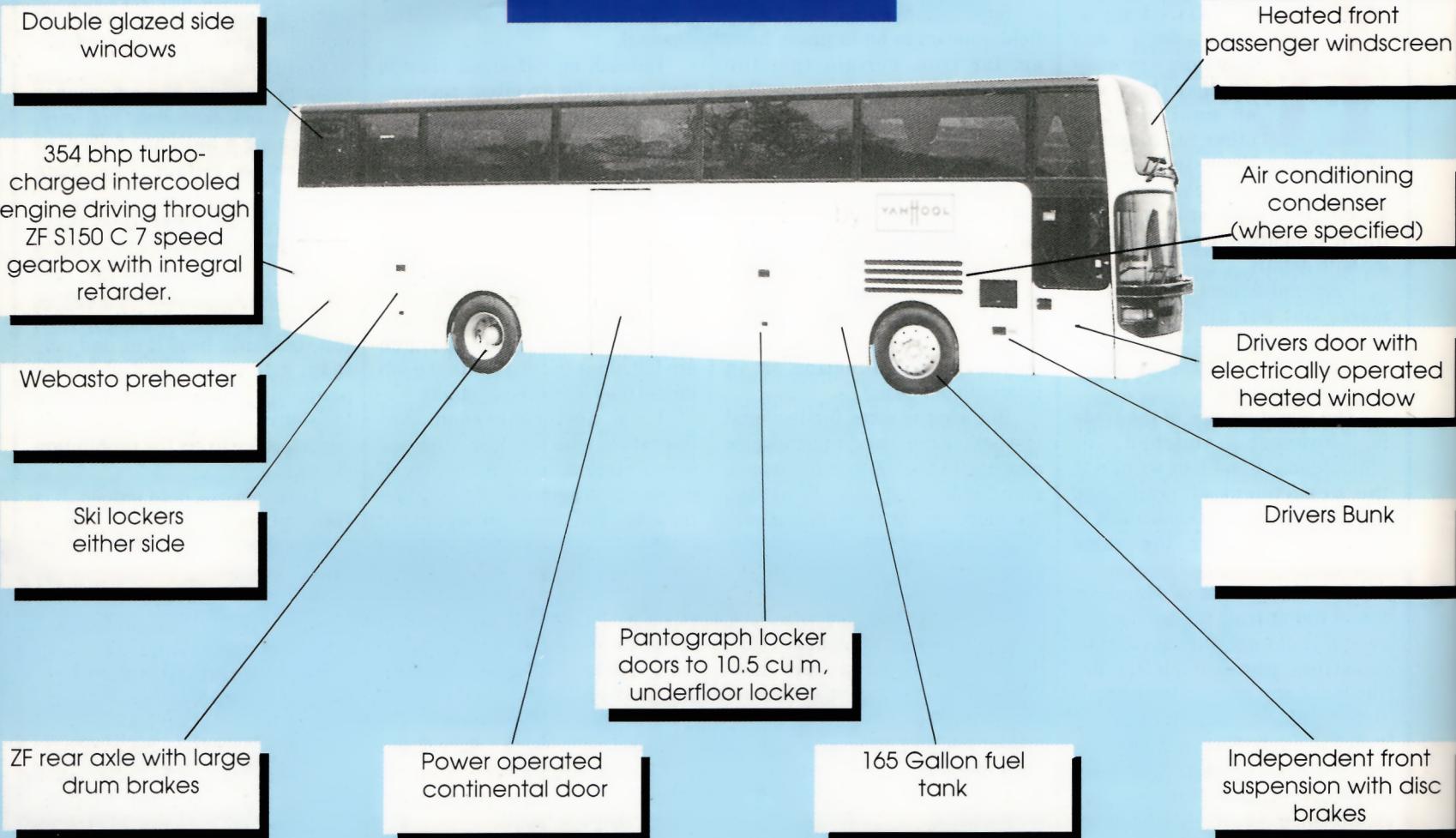
mountain slope, with no changing ends at half time. Although operators and the departments of state concerned appear to have paid scant attention to the harmonisation of effective control over the operation of passenger carrying vehicles in the Single Market, I am pleased to hear that at least one traffic commissioner has, at his own expense, conducted a fact-finding mission on this topic.

I can only hope that my raising of the issue here may lend weight to his efforts to, in the jargon of the month, kick-start those responsible for harmonisation of opportunity to actually do something about it before the Single Market backfires in our face.

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Free to be regulated

From C S Dunbar

SIR

The Conservative victory will, I suppose, mean that operators of what we used to call stage services will continue in the stranglehold of red tape engendered by the farce of 'setting buses free'.

It is my experience that the abolition of the traffic commissioners' dispensatory powers has led to traffic area staffs being more concerned with working to rule than serving the needs of the travelling public.

Minor variations in routeing and times which, formerly, would be quickly dealt with by phone and letter may now be subject to almost incredible delays.

I had a case last year where a minor application was held up for two months and an application this year the area staff sat on for three months before raising a query.

Rural operators are also going to face another hurdle if Michael Heseltine's successor does indeed abolish the shire counties and transfer their power to the district councils. Take Hereford and Worcester as an example. Of the nine districts, two are the cities of Worcester and Hereford, both important centres to which buses run from most parts of the formerly separate counties.

At present, the transport co-ordination team in Worcester takes an overall view of the county's needs when allocating such funds as it has available for subsidising the very large number of socially necessary but non-viable services the county has.

The staffs of the two cities can hardly be expected to take a view beyond their own boundaries, but the rural districts will be expected to finance people who want to spend their money in the cities.

Another point is the extra cost of devolving the co-ordinating work on the districts. Instead of a single co-ordinator with his staff in Worcester, there will be nine all, no doubt, soon acquiring a number of assistants. I hope that, if Mr Heseltine's scheme comes into effect, the districts will form a joint authority for each of the formerly separate counties.

C S Dunbar
Malvern
Worcestershire

Who needs who at EuroDisney?

From Keith Wylde

SIR

On Monday April 13, ominous though the date would seem, I took a party to EuroDisney, near Paris. We started our journey, from just south of Paris, expecting gigantic traffic queues at the entrance. We arrived at 0900, drove straight to the entrance gate, whereupon the problems began.

Here we are with 45 paying passengers who, in fact, were charged more than the normal entrance fee to ensure admission, on a coach. The little outstretched hand appears demanding a parking fee of 50 francs.

We drive to our numbered bay, which turns out to be ours for the day, so that the passengers know where to come back to. What a good idea. Off trot the happy gang to unknown pleasures. Meanwhile the driver does his little bits and pieces, then sets off to discover the lay of the land.

On arrival at the entrance gates, some considerable distance from the coach park, he is informed that 230 francs is the admission and, without a ticket, he may only look over the fence, but there is a drivers' rest room back at the coach park.

So we go back to the drivers' rest room, which we eventually find tacked on to the rear of the toilet block, with a small notice to show that this is it. On entry we find a room approximately 20 feet square, with two by four foot round tables, and about 12 hard plastic chairs.

There were also four vending machines for a variety of hot and cold drinks, sandwiches and snacks. There were also six loudspeakers in the roof playing the very noisy and repetitive tunes of the day. So loud in fact that conversations had to be held at shouting pitch.

In the light of all other theme parks giving free admission and in

most cases a subsidised meals allowance, we arranged a meeting with a lady called Caroline, who is the manager in charge of our area.

Within this meeting, we were told the marketing people at Disney had contacted most of the theme parks in Europe to ask about various incentives, and that, in the light of the answers received, to keep EuroDisney on a par with the others, coach drivers would be expected to pay the full admission charge, should they wish to enter, and that the rest room was reasonable.

Within the conversation it came out that, as far as EuroDisney is concerned, we the operators and drivers need them, as they do not need us. Drivers are paid to go and should sit in their coaches if they do not like the facilities provided and, if we do not bring the people in coaches, they will find some other way to go. Companies should provide a ticket for drivers, not EuroDisney.

Having had first-hand knowledge, I most certainly would not relish the idea of a full day from 0900 to 2330 at EuroDisney, even if the parking charge does allow unlimited return visits during the day.

An unhappy driver can spoil the passenger's holiday, with the resultant possible loss of revenue. Free admission is not a right, but what harm would it cause to EuroDisney as the driver can be one of the best ambassadors out?

The friendly Caroline has promised to look into all our comments, and did within three minutes manage to have the music in the rest room squashed. It may be that by the second week of operation, the policy regarding coach drivers will change, but I will not be putting money on it.

Keith Wylde
Visionline Coaches
Stevenage
Herts



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The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coach And Bus Week* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your name and address for our own information.

Why not join us?

From North East PSV Operators' Association

SIR

We are a recently-formed operators' association in Middlesbrough and we are fairly well supported by local coach operators. However, we do wish some larger operators would think again and join us. This letter was prompted by Marksman's article on the 'mini menace' of illegal minicoach operations which, in Cleveland County has reached epidemic proportions.

We don't agree that the enforcement agencies are unaware of the size of the problem, as we have excellent communications with our local people, who are most helpful. The problem lies with lack of staff.

Our local enforcement officers have promised to come to one of our monthly meetings and have informal discussions with members on all topics. So with this and other forthcoming attractions in mind we invite all local coach operators to come along to our next meeting at the Marton Country Club on Wednesday May 20.

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RM's versus minis: Southend showdown

COMPETITION came late to Southend. The Essex resort-cum-commuter town's two major operators - Southend Transport and Eastern National - once ran joint services and took a relaxed attitude to one another's activities over the first four years after deregulation. But not any more.

Badgerline Holdings, which bought Eastern National in 1990, determined to change that. From commanding about 63 per cent of the market before deregulation, its share had slipped to about 53 per cent and was still falling. To try to stop the rot, it split Eastern National in two in August 1990, with Thamesway created to run the routes in South Essex and London. And from January 1991 it started fighting back with high-frequency minibuses.

Minibuses have become a Badgerline hallmark, ever since the company converted its Weston super Mare network in 1985, but Thamesway managing director, Peter Edwards, says this was no mere slavish following of dogma. "We believe you can attract people back to public transport if the service is right. The key element in an urban area is frequency."

From running over 70 full-size buses on routes where a 15-minute service on a combined section counted as high frequency, it has cut big-bus operation to 30 vehicles and has drafted 69 mini and midibuses into the area to provide at least a 10-minute service on the main roads. It bought 50 new Mercedes-Benz midis for the routes, the lion's share of a £4.5 million investment in 115 new buses since Thamesway's formation.

Route numbers were retained where possible, but many new links were created and the area was blitzed in a publicity campaign to sell the network. Two leaflets, one general, the other giving more detailed timetables, were distributed to households throughout the Southend, Canvey and Rayleigh areas immediately before and during the launch and - for the first time in the area - four sheet posters were used to publicise the Thamesway network. "The network had never been sold as a network before," says Edwards.

Its simplicity was also promoted. High frequencies make timetables less necessary and, to encourage loyalty, the discount for return tickets has been increased, cutting the fare to one-and-a-half times the single rate. Services have been fine-tuned since then, notably as Thamesway has since introduced midibuses to neighbouring Basildon, and overhead costs have been cut following the closure of the company's Southend garage



Southend's two major operators have been locked in deadly competition for over a year. Who is winning? Thamesway's minibuses or Southend's Routemasters? Alan Millar reports

and the transfer of all services in the area to its Hadleigh site.

Expansion took Thamesway into areas regarded hitherto as exclusive Southend Transport territory and some journeys ran only a few minutes ahead of the Southend buses. But for a company theoretically under siege, the council-owned company exudes an air of confidence. Managing director, David Schlackman, admits things looked potentially devastating when the minibuses

first arrived and the survival strategy was a gamble, increasing services by 30 per cent to meet the challenge.

Where Thamesway uses minibuses, Southend has gone for big buses instead. But the effect is similar. Higher frequencies. On the London Road, for example, it has gone from a 10 to a five-minute frequency and the two companies are still registering services on each others' routes.

Second-hand buses had to be found in a hurry, but Southend has stuck to only two types: 10.3 metre Mark 1 Leyland Nationals and ex-London Routemasters. The company knew the technical risks it was taking with the Nationals, but felt they best met its need for low-floor buses with wide entrances.

Routemasters had been operated since 1988 and were credited with part of the success in winning business from Eastern National; their interior lighting was updated before they went into service and the company is now fitting them with DiPTAC handrails as they are overhauled.

Traffic and commercial director, Mark Howarth, says the strategy was to build on what was already in place. "We decided, when Thamesway changed absolutely everything, that we would keep our services, even if Thamesway's bus was only two or three minutes in front, and overlay additional services. So, if anyone went out for the five-past-six 4A they would still get it. We feel that's worked to our advantage. There is nothing worse than instability."

Its cause has also been helped by a "can do" culture which pre-dates deregulation. "No one turns a hair if a member of management drives a bus," says Howarth. "People change bus stop flags. Everyone mucks in." The guiding and absolute rule, the pride of Howarth's predecessor, Derek Giles, is that mileage must not be lost. "In the unlikely event of it being lost, we hold an inquiry into why and it is normally only if a bus breaks down on line of route."

Yet that has not been done with extra spare buses. Schlackman, an accountant who only joined the industry in the mid-1980s, says that would encourage waste. "It was a conscious decision not to have spare buses because that leads to a concentration of not doing what's necessary."

But, knowing that their jobs depended on a successful defence of their services against Thamesway's attack, the Southend workforce was determined to succeed. Training has been used to improve customer handling techniques and to help ensure that competition on the streets does not degenerate into brawls at the bus stops.

Some staff wanted to respond to a



Home advantage? Southend is thought to be winning

Thamesway "Don't get the blues, travel with us" campaign with one saying "Don't get marooned, go with Southend Transport", but management resisted the temptation. Southend's buses are blue, Thamesway's maroon.

Ultimately, the two companies' successes can only be measured by sustained bottom line performance. The recession is confusing the picture, with definite cuts in the numbers of passengers using rail feeder buses on to rail services into London.

Major employers have laid off staff and there are fewer visits to the shops. A recent survey showed Southend was the sixth worst town in a league table of house repossession. On the other hand, more children are staying on at school and the recession may have led some motorists to

keep its tactics and thoughts away from the media fishbowl, but outside impressions suggest Southend may be happier than Thamesway.

Edwards says midibuses have won more passengers. "Patronage has increased on a route-by-route basis. The whole thing is still growing, but in different areas at different rates."

He will not divulge whether it is making money. "I don't think any business, whether in transport or not, is making the return it would wish to in the recession. We're happy with the operation the way it is at the moment."

Schlackman is not divulging any figures either, but he does say the company has done well. "At the start of the year to March 31, I didn't have a clue if we would survive the

onslaught. It was difficult at the beginning, but we are exceeding the tough 'tongue in cheek' revenue budget we set ourselves." He says there is no question that margins have been affected, though.

Both companies say increased frequencies have expanded the market to some extent, although Southend says the market was growing once it started running Routemasters. Howarth says competition has intensified the company's drive to be more business and customer orientated, but it has impeded progress on other fronts; fleet modernisation has been slowed down and the company has had less time for long-term planning.

"When the BCC brought out *Buses Mean Business*, we were in the midst of looking at our survival," says Schlackman. "We didn't have time to present glorious propaganda for county councils and borough councils."

Yet, despite the competition, there are areas where both companies want local action and are talking to each other. A strong car-owner lobby has been resisting moves for bus priorities, despite near gridlock traffic conditions on several roads.

Part of the London Road has been converted from four lanes to two, to create more parking space. Says Edwards: "Where there are bollards in the centre, there is insufficient width for a bus to overtake a cyclist. That is not good for public transport."

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All change at Merseybus

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Perhaps that is why the board of Merseyside Transport Ltd (MTL) cast wide for a new managing director two years ago and why it plumped for someone totally new to the bus industry.

Latterly personnel director at the Babcock-owned Naval Dockyard at Rosyth, his career was in the Navy, qualifying as a naval architect and developing management skills as he progressed through the dockyards and lived through the traumas of their privatisation and diversification into totally new civilian markets.

Clearly strong and determined enough to implement change, Birmingham-born Coombes is nonetheless relaxed and affable with colleagues. As he walks around the Edge Lane headquarters and engineering works - a 15-acre monument to a tram system closed 35 years ago - he wears shirt sleeves and is on first-name terms. Needless formality is being swept away.

And while he is clearly at ease with Liverpudlians and his weekday home is a city flat, Coombes also enjoys the Scottish lifestyle he first encountered when he moved from Devon to Rosyth.

He commutes at weekends - by car - to join his wife and family in Fife. It may seem unusual to some, but Coombes' journey to work is modest compared with most of his neighbours. "Most of my working neighbours are in the oil industry and work outside the UK. I am one of the near commuters," he says.

The MTL job, running Merseybus and its related activities in Liverpool, Birkenhead, Wallasey, St Helens and Southport, came up at an opportune time for Coombes. He had attempted to lead an employee buy-out at Rosyth and, although

Peter Coombes is steering Merseybus back into profit. Alan Millar meets the former Navy dockyard manager to find out how he is injecting fresh spirit into a business which was slow to adjust to deregulation

he remained for three years after Babcock took over, he wanted more autonomy. "I knew I was never going to get my own ship."

A 100 per cent Employee Share Ownership Plan (ESOP) was already on the stocks for MTL. Not only that, but the job had a great deal in common with the dockyards: high costs, a declining local market and a huge people management challenge.

Massive naval refits, two years in the planning, another two actually doing the job, taught him a lot about the importance of people, but he dates one of his personal breakthroughs much earlier. In his 20s, running a rugby club taught him a lot.

"That was extremely significant in my personal development. It was like managing a business, except that the people were far freer to opt out if they didn't like it. We went through something of a turnaround with the club and I've become interested in turnaround situations since then."

MTL was a turnaround case if ever there



Ageing fleet: there are plans to buy 50 new this year



Coombes: 'We had a company that was going bust'

was one. At its formation in 1986, it had shed jobs and cut back arbitrarily on the services provided up till then by Merseyside PTE, but in the process propelled labour, redundancy cheques, surplus buses and market opportunities into new competitors' hands. The largest of these, Fareway, is also the largest new-start bus company in the country and has been an inspiration to others in Liverpool which grew while Merseybus struggled.

Coombes inherited a business with 3,000 employees, seven garages and 1,100 buses. It was plunging into losses as its costs outstripped its income and was not generating enough cash to replace its buses. Today, L-registered buses are still running, the average age of the fleet is 13 years and corrosion and water ingress is a serious problem.

If new buses could somehow be thrown at the problem, that would not have been enough. Market share had plunged alarmingly. From running 72 per cent of commercial miles in October 1986, it had plunged to 55 per cent in 1990. Coombes pulls no punches. "We had a company that was going bust."

He knew from experience at Rosyth that people expected to see quick evidence of change at the top. And change had to begin with management. All employees were invited to apply for the top posts in the company. That process alone revealed the relative enthusiasm of different managers and psychometric testing provided an additional insight. Of the team of 10 top managers then employed, only two remain; vacancies for three other posts are being filled.

Coombes knew the sort of people he needed to change the company's culture. "Above all, I wanted people prepared to take



2,500-word initiatives in a structured fashion. People who would burn their guts out. In particular, I looked for doers, people who will get other people's acceptance."

As someone who had come from a military background, he says he was struck by how formalised and status conscious the company was. It reinforced an "us and them" culture. "People were doing what they were told. The whole organisation was based on climbing up a pile. We had to free things up. People should feel free to contribute and to debate."

Nothing expressed this image more forcibly than the use of uniforms. "I don't mind drivers wearing uniforms, but I don't like to have others wearing uniforms. I felt it made the inspectors more like policemen. Their relationship with drivers was to discipline them. That was the way it had developed. And people sitting behind glass screens in vast traffic halls created more of an "us and them" atmosphere. It should have been on the basis of respect for each other," he says.

That moulded his selection of managers. "I'd look for people who didn't feel they needed that sort of culture to back them up. If people lack confidence, they look for that sort of structure."

One of Coombes' changes, unlike the strategy of many other operators, has been to develop MTL's engineering and ancillary businesses. Here again were distinct parallels with Rosyth which, today, refurbishes London Underground trains as part of its diversification strategy.

"We have tried to grow the business and not cut it to shreds. If you have people you can sensibly deploy, it makes sense provided you don't take your eye off the core

'People were doing what they were told. The whole organisation was based on climbing up a pile. We had to free things up. People should feel free to contribute and to debate'

business."

Some activities like the light vehicle fleet and the driving school have gone, but £2.5 million of the company's £50 million turnover comes from the ancillary businesses. MTL Medical Services, developed out of the in-house service to test drivers' health, has grown into an occupational health screening service which generates £500,000 income, some of it from executive screening.

Graffiti Busters, selling protective coatings for buildings exteriors so graffiti can be washed off easily, is bringing in another £200,000 a year and is poised for expansion.

Quality Fibreglass Production Services is typical of the object of the diversification programme. The Merseybus fleet consumes sizeable quantities of glass fibre for body repairs and, simply by increasing the productivity of the employees already dedicated to the work, it is pulling in orders for £150,000 worth of bus body parts from other operators.

MTL Engineering has a maintenance contract with Merseyside PTE for shelter maintenance and does other work on street furniture, but by far the biggest growth opportunity is in bus refurbishment. The Merseymaid bus - a life-expired Atlantean exhibited at last year's Coach & Bus Show at the NEC - was refurbished with soft trim,

coach seats, Transmatic lighting, a compact electrical system and a modernised cab with more comfortable seat, partly to show Merseybus staff how the fleet could be improved, but also to sell the concept of refurbishment to other operators.

Work was already coming in. The Edge Lane works have almost completed converting 300 London Buses Metrobuses to DiPTAC standard and are busy refurbishing buses for Isle of Man National Transport, Hyndburn, Northumbria, Midland Red North and Midland Fox.

Coombes sees tremendous growth prospects for this part of the business and his sales staff say they have already begun to persuade operators to consider refurbishment for the first time. "It clearly seems to me that everyone is having a problem funding new buses, but everyone has a corrosion problem with their older buses."

MTL Engineering wants to become a permanent specialist in this area and to run the operation on a production line basis. "We're not a manufacturer dabbling in it. It's something we do," says Coombes. And as productivity improvements are made in the garages, engineering staff are being moved to Edge Lane to help handle more refurbishment.

The coach fleet is also being relaunched. A coaching specialist, Chris Niblock, was recruited from West Midlands Travel and the company's bonded holidays are now being promoted under a new Sightseers name.

Diversification may be important, but the core business was where the problems lay and where action needed to be taken. The object was to do more with less, but in a way which won back business and restored profitability.

To achieve that meant changes in working practices and one of the biggest upheavals ever in the Liverpool bus network.

From July 1 last year, the old divisions between the north and south of the city were ended as many services were linked to run across town for the first time. It also meant a major emotional break with the past, by abandoning the Pier Head terminus used by generations of Liverpudlians but by then largely obsolete. "It was costing us a lot of money running buses into Liverpool into a bus station that also cost a good deal of money," says Coombes.

Garages were closed - including the operating depot at Edge Lane which is on only one Merseybus route - and demarcation has ended among engineering staff as part of a drive for better reliability.

There have been redundancies. There has been a nine per cent fall in driving staff, 26 per cent in manual workers and 33 per cent among clerical and administrative staff. The bus fleet has been cut by 13 per cent, with surplus buses stored so they do not creep back into service and discourage engineering efficiency, but despite its age, the fleet is being worked harder. Commercial mileage is up from 27.4 to 27.9 million and each bus now does 37,000 miles, 5,000 more than in 1990.

It is exacting a price out of the buses and



Hyndburn buses at Edge Lane: diversification brings in £2.5million of MTL's £50 million turnover

Coombes plans imminent investment in new and refurbished buses. He plans to acquire at least 50 new buses in the current financial year and says refurbishment is likely for 10-year-old buses, to deal particularly with what may be a more severe problem on Merseyside: leaking windows. He is confident that reliability will reach at least 98.5 per cent, perhaps more.

The market share is now up to around 58 per cent and Coombes anticipates a return to modest profitability before long. But he has ambitions of further growth. "In Liverpool, there are 20 to 30 per cent too many buses on the road and the market won't sort itself out until they come off. The battle is about whose buses those are."

Critical to Merseybus's strategy is its Supersaver bus-only season ticket, cheaper than the rival all-operator Solo ticket launched by Merseyside PTE, but only accepted by Merseybus on its tendered services. It says Solo is an obstacle to building up customer loyalty and is encouraging staff to sell the benefits of Supersaver when customers try to board with a Solo ticket. Such is the importance of the issue to Coombes and Merseybus that the ESOP buy-out has been delayed by Merseyside PTE's insistence that acceptance of Solo is a condition of the company's sale.

Communications have been vital to implementation of the change. Coombes and

his management team meet regularly with staff and union representatives, frank newsletters are issued to staff and details like market share are displayed in garages.

"It pleases me that drivers now talk about market share when I meet them," he says.

And that is helping win acceptance for the company's plan to win more market share by setting up a low-cost subsidiary to compete against some of the small operators in the area.

Drawlane's North Western already set up its Red Knight company to compete in the tendered market and Coombes has secured board approval to run a similar Merseybus subsidiary.

It will not compete against the company's commercial services, nor for tendered routes already operated, but Coombes sees it as an essential plank if it is to survive in the tendered bus market. There are sufficient buses in mothballs for the fleet to be set up quickly.

To generate the income needed to take the company onward, Coombes has switched the focus of change. "It is more about bottom-

up rather than top-down change. Senior management's role is one of developing people, of more teamwork and asking people for the little things that go wrong."

In staff newsletters, he encourages employees to save costs by not throwing away nuts and bolts, by switching off engines when possible and by making fewer phone calls. "It is up to each and every person to make the many small changes to ensure that we continuously bridge the income/cost gap," he says.

Now is also the time to start exercises like customer care training. "I think it is a fallacy to say that training drivers gives a better service until you do something about the quality of service from management to the driver. It is a long process."



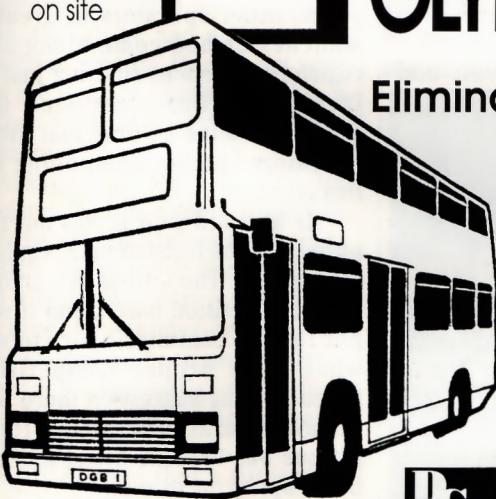
Competition has reduced Merseybus' market share

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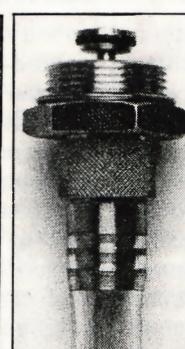
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Citibus complaints ag - commissioner takes

NO action was taken against Greater Manchester Buses after complaints from rivals Citibus Tours, of Oldham, were considered by the North Western Traffic Commissioner, Mr Martin Albu, and his deputy, Mr John Levin, at a Manchester public inquiry.

The commissioners had been considering banning GM Buses from operating some or any local services, and directing that it repay 20 per cent of the total fuel duty rebate grant received over the previous three months, following allegations about the way the company had been operating over certain routes in the Oldham corridor.

For GM Buses, Stephen Sauvain said it was conceded they had operated "composite services", that is services operating partly on one registration and partly on another. He maintained there was nothing wrong with that as a matter of law.

Keith Roach, a Citibus inspector, said that, in February, numerous minibuses appeared operating directly in front of Citibus services. The clear intention was to interfere with those services and carry passengers Citibus should have carried. He had seen GM Buses inspectors telling minibus drivers to drive off as soon as they saw a Citibus bus. There were times when bus stops had been blocked by GM Buses.

On one occasion a single decker allowed passengers to board and pay fares. When the GM Buses service bus arrived, the passengers were directed on to that bus. The single decker had just been there to prevent the passengers boarding a Citibus bus, claimed Mr Roach.

Questioned by Mr Sauvain, Mr Roach said he regarded what was occurring as a form of unfair competition. Additional buses were being operated outside the registered service times.

He agreed that there were occasions when Citibus buses did not always operate to timetable, due to adverse traffic conditions, and that it was impossible for buses to be always spot on timetable when operating in the city centre.

Mr Sauvain said it was not disputed that minibuses had been

run as duplicates to existing services, but Mr Albu said there was nothing in the legislation that said there had to be a need before duplicate vehicles were operated. Where such operation was within five minutes of the registered time, no offence was committed.

DTp traffic examiner Terence Brown said he had seen a minibus pick up passengers and remain on the stand until a Citibus bus arrived. On the other side of the road he noted a GM Buses double decker waiting on a stand.

A Citibus double decker arrived and was unable to get on the stand. A minibus arrived and parked alongside the two double deckers. When the GM Buses service bus

'Mr Albu said there was no doubt GM Buses had embarked upon a policy of aggressive competition, but it was not his job to regulate competition as such'

moved off, a GM Buses inspector walked into the roadway and directed the minibus into the stand, preventing the Citibus vehicle getting on to the stand.

George Scrymgeour, GM Buses chief controller of services, said they had set up certain experimental services by running duplicates. The intention had been to obtain more business. There had been no specific intent to target a particular operator. The intention was to target specific routes which the company regarded as potentially profitable. The company had identified a number of key routes which it felt were worthy of development on a commercial basis.

The duplicates were run within

YOUR WEEKLY REPORT ON LAW AND THE COACH AND BUS OPERATOR
BY MICHAEL JEWELL

five minutes either way of the base registration, except in one case where the headway was less than 10 minutes. In that case they had selected times they had felt were best from a commercial point of view. In one case a composite service had been withdrawn, following a complaint, but a decision to then register that service had been a purely commercial one.

Mr Scrymgeour said that he accepted that, on a number of occasions, duplicates had operated up to three minutes outside the

departures had been confused in the alleged incident involving the transfer of passengers. An analysis of the Wayfarer report revealed that only one passenger boarded the single decker.

Questioned by Mr Albu, Mr Scrymgeour said they had wanted to pick routes in a narrow sector so as to concentrate the initiative. They had not mirrored services from end to end but had chosen parts of routes which they felt were more appropriate to commercial duplication.

He agreed that the duplicates were timed one minute ahead of the Citibus service on a section between Stevenson Square and Newton Heath.

Mr Albu said that, by only operating part of the route, GM Buses was ensuring that the minibus arrived back at Stevenson Square, and was in a position to pick up passengers before the Citibus service got there, but Mr Scrymgeour said it was not denied that the minibuses were being operated as a commercial exercise. They were run according to running boards and not on an ad-hoc basis to cream off traffic.

Deputy managing director, Rodney Dickinson, said that, since deregulation, any bus operator had the freedom to operate whenever he chose. Other operators in Greater Manchester had come along and registered services running just in front of GM Buses services. GM Buses had done nothing that other operators had not been doing for five years.

Mr Sauvain said it was not the purpose of the legislation to regulate competition. The Citibus complaints were competition based, and it was not for the commissioners to say what were proper competitive practices. The suggestion there was always a minibus waiting for a Citibus bus to come along was not borne out by the evidence.

Mr Albu said there was no doubt that GM Buses had embarked upon a policy of aggressive competition, but it was not his job to regulate



GMB 'doing nothing that other operators had not been doing for five years'

against GMB no action

competition as such. Big operators could flood the market and drive out others who could not stand the heat. That was legitimate as the law stood.

As far as composite services were concerned, he felt that GM Buses had stretched the law to its utmost and beyond. The idea that the company could vary the end stop of services by whim seemed to him to be going too far.

Services had to be registered so that people knew where they started and stopped, and in so far as composite services had been

operated, GM Buses had been operating outside the registered particulars.

He accepted that the registration of a large number of services at a particular place was not "interference" with the services of another operator, and that "interference" had to be physical.

There was insufficient evidence to make a finding about the allegation an inspector had interfered with a Citibus bus by stepping in front of it, but he was issuing a general warning that inspectors



Citibus claimed GMB was 'interfering with services'

must not interfere with other operators' buses, and that queuing buses must be allowed on to a stop in order of arrival.

Mr Albu indicated he was prepared to waive the 42 days notice

requirement if GM Buses wished to register any of the routes presently being operated on a composite basis.



Gary's of Tredegar licence duration cut by two years

THE duration of the licence held by Gary Lane, trading as Gary's of Tredegar, was cut so that it expires at the end of the year, instead of in 1994, when he appeared at disciplinary proceedings before the South Wales Traffic Commissioner, John Mervyn Pugh.

DTp vehicle examiner, Douglas Gough, said that, since the last time Mr Lane had appeared before the commissioner, all his vehicles had been checked and found to be satisfactory.

They had been inspected every seven days by British Road Services, in accordance with undertakings given, though he had not seen the inspection records. He was not sure what the position was in regard to a contract with the Freight Transport Association.

Asking for Mr Lane to be released from his commitment to have the vehicles inspected weekly by BRS, Barry Prior, for the firm, said their own fitter would be checking the vehicles every seven days. There had been no problems since a driver daily nil defect reporting system had been introduced.

Mr Lane said that a fitter who had been working with coaches in Jersey, and who had "glowing references", was about to enter his employ. He had known the fitter

concerned, a Mr Morgan, for a considerable time before he went to work in the Channel Islands.

Mr Gough said he would have reservations if the BRS inspections were dropped, but Mr Prior said he was conscious that any new staff would want to "bed themselves in".

He suggested that the BRS inspections continue until the end of the month, during which time Mr Morgan should make himself known to Mr Gough. In appointing Mr

'I accept he comes here with good intent but he gets diverted. I look to the future but cannot forget the past' - South Wales Traffic Commissioner John Mervyn Pugh

Morgan, Mr Lane had to pay him and BRS and there was a limit to how much the coffers could stand.

Mr Mervyn Pugh said that what worried him was if they got Mr Lane right and something happened. "He must know that if he gets a PG9 marked 'neglect' all the good work that has been done goes," said Mr Mervyn Pugh. "He has such a history but I don't want him to go out of business."

He did not hold things against Mr Lane, but he did not forget that he told "a pack of lies" to the Transport Tribunal about his maintenance when he successfully

appealed against the revocation of his licence. "I accept he comes here with good intent but he gets diverted," said Mr Mervyn Pugh. "I look to the future but cannot forget the past."

Curtailing the duration of the licence, Mr Mervyn Pugh said that Mr Lane was a "nice guy" who had not been strong enough with his fitters in the past. When he employed Mr Morgan he had to be in charge. "I think we can make you a good operator but I am worried things could possibly slip," he said. "I want to take those possibilities away."

In these times of recession the coach industry was getting harder and harder.

That was why he did not want people to go out of the industry and the prime reason he wanted safe buses.

Directing that the renewal application be considered at a public inquiry, Mr Mervyn Pugh said that he wanted Mr Lane to bring Mr Morgan with him.

He would hopefully be able to say cheerio to BRS, but if there were any prohibitions marked "neglect" the generosity extended to Mr Lane would cease.

"You have got your vehicles up to standard, keep it that way," said Mr Mervyn Pugh.



Glue sniffer vandalism led to fine

LANE LLI-based Jenkins Tours has been fined £150 for not carrying fire extinguishers and first aid kits, and for failing to display PSV operator's licence identity discs.

The company pleaded guilty before the town's magistrates to four offences of not having fire extinguishers on its vehicles, to three of not carrying first aid kits, and to two of failing to display licence discs.

For the company, Michael Edwards said solvent sniffing vandals had damaged fire extinguishers in the buses so badly they could not be refilled. They were waiting for their suppliers to get new extinguishers when traffic examiners checked four coaches on a school contract at the local comprehensive school.

All the problems had been caused by break-ins at Jenkins' depot, at Hillside, Furnace, said Mr Edwards. He read letters from neighbours who spoke of chasing intruders from the depot and watching youngsters sniffing from fire extinguishers.

South Wales Police had confirmed that one youth had died from fire extinguisher sniffing, said Mr Edwards. The first aid kits had been rifled for smelling salts and other items and then thrown away.



Omnibus system for Hong Kong Citybus

TSUI'S Hong Kong Citybus has settled on a computerised timetable generating and scheduling system from Omnibus Systems, after evaluating various other systems from around the world.

Citybus managing director, Lyndon Rees said the company had been looking for an established scheduling software package in its quest for more efficient and cost effective scheduling of its 200-strong coach and bus fleet. The Omnibus System package was considered to fit this need perfectly and it was a timely purchase given the major fleet expansion planned over the next few years.

Mr Rees added that he had been very impressed with the co-



Citybus vehicles will be controlled by British system

operation of Omnibus proprietor Peter Crichton and his willingness to fly out to Hong Kong at short notice.

As part of the package, Citybus is sending some of its younger executives to the UK for training, and Mr Crichton is to co-ordinate this.

Mr Rees said he saw considerable future potential for computer scheduling systems with mainland Chinese city bus operators with which Citybus had close working relationships, and he would take an early opportunity to demonstrate the new package to them.

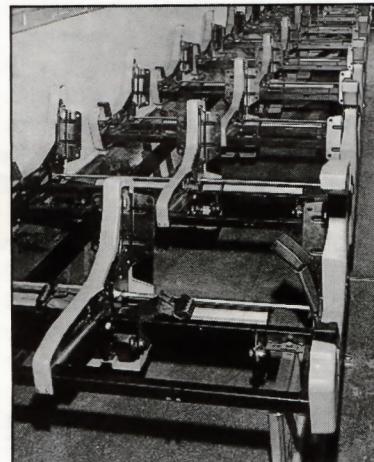
Contact Omnibus Systems, 90 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DS. Tel: (061) 628 9818.

Kaye is casting out for Plaxton

KAYE (Presteigne) Ltd is the supplier of aluminium diecastings used in the interiors of the new range of Plaxton coach bodies.

The company supplies the three castings which make up the passenger seat frames, the two castings for the drop arms on the aisle side of all the seats and the luggage rack fixing systems on all the new models.

Ian Creed, technical sales manager at Kaye said: "We have been supplying various designs of seat frame castings to Plaxton



The seat frame castings

since 1968. That ensures that the two companies have developed a strong working relationship, understanding the design requirements and manufacturability of each others' products and processes."

Contact: Kay (Presteigne) Ltd, Harper Street, Presteigne, Powys LD8 2AL. Tel: (0544) 267551.

Cool down the Olympian

A COOLING system improving kit has been developed for the Leyland Olympian double decker.

Using experience gained while developing Fame cooling kits for Titan and Metro buses for various London Buses operating companies, DGB has designed the system in close consultation with a number of Olympian operators.

The system consists of an additional header tank and an expansion tank, both made from high grade polypropylene, plus all the necessary mounting brackets, fittings and silicone hoses.

In operation, the extra capacity provided by the additional header tank greatly improves the cooling efficiency, while the expansion tank has a pressure relief valve set to maintain a normal operating pressure and sufficient capacity

to accommodate coolant expansion. This virtually eliminates coolant loss and therefore antifreeze can be retained in the system all year round.

Installation normally takes approximately four hours and is usually carried out on the customer's own premises by trained fitters. Alternatively, DGB can supply kits directly for installation by the customer's own staff. Existing kits are running successfully on Leyland Atlanteans and Titans, MCW Metrobuses, Volvos, Dennis Dominators and others, and more than 200 vehicles have the kits fitted.

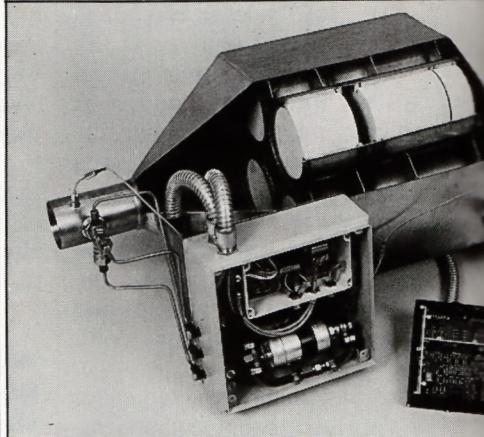
Contact DGB Products (UK) Ltd, 12-13 Commerce Way, Dale Hall Industrial Estate, Lawford, Manningtree, Essex CO11 1UN. Tel: (0206) 392622.

Eminox green system

STAINLESS exhaust specialist Eminox is to demonstrate a diesel exhaust system with an integral oxidation catalyst and particulate filter.

The device is the result of a collaborative agreement between Johnson Matthey subsidiary Svenska Emissionsteknik of Sweden and Eminox. It incorporates Emissionsteknik's active regenerative trap, ART 700.

This is a modular device containing a ceramic monolithic catalyst and wall-flow filter, with a microprocessor-based management module which uses the inputs from various sensors to provide over-all control of the exhaust filtration process. Eminox has designed the exhaust system to incorporate the ART 700; the result is the elimination of up to 80 per cent of the hydrocarbons,



The active regenerative trap in cross section

carbon monoxide and particulates, and 90 per cent of the gaseous polycarbonates. The diesel aroma is also virtually eliminated.

The Eminox system is on trial with the Royal Mail as part of that organisation's Green Vehicle programme, and a truck equipped with the device will be on display at the IRTE exhibition in Telford on May 14-15.

Contact Eminox Ltd, North Warren Road, Gainsborough, Lincs DN21 2TU. Tel: (0427) 810088.



N O W T H E R E ' S W A L E S F O R Y O U .

Group Travel Wales

A Wales Tourist Board publication produced in conjunction with Coach and Bus Week magazine

MAY 1992 Issue 3

Garden Festival Wales

IT'S not long to go before the opening of Britain's biggest, brightest and most exciting tourist attraction of the year - Garden Festival Wales.

From May 1st until October 4th the spectacular scenery of Ebbw Vale in the South Wales Valleys will provide a stunning backdrop to a programme of events, exhibitions and breathtaking horticultural displays which will be enjoyed by over 2 million

visitors.

The Festival offers advantageous group rates to operators. Adult day tickets cost £7.65 for bookings of 20 to 99 and £7.15 for 100 and over, which represent significant discounts on the full adult day ticket price of £8.50.

Tickets for children aged five to 16, senior citizens, the unemployed and disabled are £5 and free entry will be given to

children under 5, coach drivers (1 per coach), bona fide couriers (1 per coach) and carers for the disabled (1:5 ratio).

Booking forms are available now as are credit account application forms.

The Festival can also offer operators a selection of point of sale material (window display units, window and coach stickers) as well as posters and shell folders. Graphic support in the

form of transparencies, style sheets and logo specification sheets, is also available on request.

Garden Festival Wales is open daily from 10am - 7pm, May, September and October. 10am - 8pm, June, July and August.

For further information please contact Catherine Hill, Deputy Marketing Manager, Garden Festival Wales, Festival House, Victoria, Ebbw Vale, Gwent, NP3 6UF. Tel: (0495) 350198.

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

ABERYSTWYTH Arts Centre is Wales' largest and most exciting arts centre, and Mid Wales' major multi-media venue. In addition to a fascinating programme of exhibitions, films and courses, the Arts Centre offers a wonderful choice of live entertainment from musicals to drama, from comedy to opera, from dance to orchestral concerts, from kids' shows to jazz and roots, from famous TV stars to choral concerts.

Many of these live events may be just what you're looking for if you're trying to arrange a party outing for your club or society. The Arts Centre offers an excellent range of discounts and/or free tickets to party organisers, for all its live events, and all queries and bookings are looked after personally by Party Bookings Co-ordinator, Dorothy Clifford.

The most popular show for group bookings is the annual Summer Season musical, a professional production which always delights local and tourist audiences alike. The 1992 show is The King and I, a wonderful show which would make an attractive

inclusion in any daytrip, short or long stay holiday in the area.

The Arts Centre offers an excellent range of discounts and/or free tickets to party organisers, for all its live events, and all enquiries and bookings by coach companies and club secretaries are looked after personally by Party Bookings Co-ordinator, Dorothy Clifford.

Party rates are available to groups of eight or more, with one free ticket to the organiser: parties over 30 will get four free tickets. Party rate tickets start at £5.00 at the beginning of the run, going up to £7.00 at the end (full price tickets are £9.00).

The King and I runs from mid-July to the end of August, with evening shows at 7.30pm (except Sundays) and 2.30pm matinees on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Please address all enquiries about The King and I, or any other Arts Centre event, to Dorothy Clifford, Party Bookings Organiser, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Penglais, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3DE, phone (0970) 622893, or Suzy Davies, Marketing Manager at the same address, telephone (0970) 622893.

CHILDHOOD



Puppet masters Chris Somerville and Eric Bramall check the puppets before a show.

Harlequin puppet theatre

Why should kids have all the fun?

ALTHOUGH puppets are traditionally children's entertainment, adults are getting in on the act with their own

special productions at Wales' only permanent puppet theatre.

The Harlequin Marionette Theatre, Rhos-on-Sea, Colwyn Bay,



Harlequin puppet theatre

will continue to delight the family audience with its 3pm matinee fare of fun and fairy tales. Younger children, however, will be discouraged from attending evening performances which, are designed for a more mature audience such as Gilbert and Sullivan, with productions of Ruddigore and of The Mikado. The Harlequin's adult repertoire also includes Old Time Music Hall, which is particularly popular with the more elderly who love to join in with the old songs, and a couple of full-blooded Victorian Melodramas.

The Harlequin, the first theatre in Britain to be designed and built solely for puppets, opened in 1958. Since then puppet-masters Eric Bramall and Chris Somerville have continually delighted young and old alike with a glittering array of productions.

Eric and Chris make all the puppets and scenery as well as

bringing their creations to life in this Tourist Board Award winning theatre.

The elegant auditorium, seating 118 visitors in comfort, is a perfect replica of the plush theatres of yesteryear. It is probably the only place where one can still see a traditional marionette show in the grand manner.

The Harlequin opens for the main holiday periods, and is also available, by arrangement, throughout the year for coach parties. This distinctive and highly popular show can be enjoyed, at moderate cost, at any time of the year.

THEATRE BOOKING CONTACT:

Eric Bramall, The Mews House, Penrhyn Bay Llandudno, Gwynedd. Tel: (0492) 549578

PRESS/PUBLICITY CONTACT:

Chris Somerville. Tel: (0492) 582062



Childhood revisited

OVER 200 more toys will be added this year to the collection of 4000 items already displayed at the toy museum, Childhood Revisited in Llandudno.

The model working railway is the centre piece of the museum and is undergoing total refurbishment in time for the reopening on 1st March.

In addition to the dolls ranging from sixteenth century to present day, toys, books, games, a display of British motorcycles from 1914 to 1970, and fashion catalogues are also on display. More costumes and Victorian underwear will be on display next year. Located in Llandudno coach groups and disabled are very welcome.

For further details - telephone (0492) 870424.



Alice in Wonderland Visitor Centre.

Alice in Wonderland Centre

MURIEL and Murray Ratcliffe of the Alice in Wonderland Visitor Centre in Llandudno are offering a free special service to coach operators who book group visits to the Centre.

In Llandudno - the seaside resort where the "real" Alice, (Alice Liddell), spent the Summers of her childhood, in the Victorian era, - the services of an experienced courier are offered to those coach groups who wish to take the Alice in Wonderland Trail through the town. An experienced courier will travel with you on your

coach tour of Llandudno to narrate to your group whilst you see the various landmarks connected with the "real" Alice of Wonderland, who lived in Llandudno in the Victorian days. Your group will also make a memorable visit to Wonderland in our beautifully-created Rabbit Hole provided with individual stereo recordings of the Wonderland story. The approach to the Rabbit Hole is down our specially-designed approach (made to accommodate wheelchairs and pushchairs, too) and into our Alice Curio shop.

From there one takes the journey through the Rabbit Hole to experience Alice's Adventures in the timeless world of Lewis Carroll.

On the 50 minute "Adventure" the courier will point out the house where Alice spent her first holiday in Llandudno, the house which her father built and where she lived for 10 years, the church which she attended, the famous White Rabbit Statue and then the highlight will be a magical trip down the Rabbit Hole, which is an enchanting experience for all ages. The authenticated narration will describe many fascinating features of Alice's childhood in the Victorian days and the enthralling

events of her later life. If your party is staying at a local address in Llandudno, the courier will join the tour at your hotel and commence narration there. Tours should be booked in advance. Evening bookings welcome. The centre is open 7 days per week almost all year.

The total Llandudno tour/admission charge is recommended at £2.00 per head (drivers free).

This is a "group charge". (Commission arrangements).

Muriel and Murray Ratcliffe, Alice in Wonderland Centre, 3-4 Trinity Square, Llandudno North Wales. Tel & Fax: (0492) 860082.

TRAIN NEWS

Welsh Highland Railway

Rheilffordd Ucheldir Cymry, Porthmadog, Gwynedd

NEW FOR '92!!

TO enable coach parties to obtain that essential hands on feel of railway restoration, the Welsh Highland Railway is this year featuring guided walks along the old track bed in the world famous Aberglasslyn Pass. Not only will visitors be able to appreciate all the dramatic beauty of the pass, but they can also see and understand what motivates

railway enthusiasts as they strive to achieve the unachievable and to preserve the unpreserveable! ...

The walk will be followed by a train journey on that section of the Welsh Highland which has so far been restored between Porthmadog and Pen-y-Mount. The trip includes a tour of the train sheds and works, followed by tea and biscuits in the platform located cafe. Then there's the



chance to browse in one of the Country's most extensive railway bookshops, plus the opportunity to buy a memento in the well stocked souvenir shop.

The rebuilding of the Welsh Highland is probably one of the most spectacularly ambitious railway restoration projects in the Country. Our passengers will not only be able to enjoy a ride on one of the Great Little Trains of Wales but will also have the unique experience of seeing the line as it once was, and as it will be again, in one of the most beautiful settings in Wales.

For a train trip with a difference the Welsh Highland has a lot to offer.

Full details from: David Allan, Welsh Highland Railway, Po-hmadog, Gwynedd, LIA9 9DY. Tel: 0516081950 (day), Tel: 051327 3576 (eve)



Ffestiniog Railway

Improved services for coach operators

TECHNICAL advances on the 13 1/2 mile scenic narrow gauge Ffestiniog Railway have enabled the 1992 timetable to have a simplified format. All trains leave

Porthmadog Harbour Station at quarter to the hour, and all trains leave Blaenau Ffestiniog on the hour. At peak times the services are hourly right through from 0845

Ffestiniog Railway.

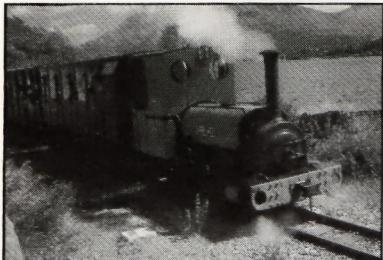
in the morning to 1745 in the afternoon. At quieter periods there may be gaps in the service, but drivers will usually find a train at the time they want one.

The group fares for pre-booked parties give operators a better deal than ever before, the full distance single fare for groups being £3.30 per person compared with the publicly advertised fare of £5.40, a massive 39% discount. The return fare is double the single. Children under 16 travel at half price.

Coaches are smarter and more comfortable. Only the scenery remains unchanged and countless passengers will testify that it is unsurpassed in Britain anywhere.

For further details - telephone (0766) 512340.

Llanberis Lake Railway



Llanberis Lake Railway

1992 marks a milestone in the history of the Llanberis Lake Railway, situated at the foot of Snowdon, as it prepares to celebrate its "coming of age", having been operating along the shores of Padarn Lake for 21 years.

Set within the Padarn Country Park at Llanberis, Gwynedd, on the A4086 Capel Curig to Caernarfon Road, this "Great Little Train of Wales" was specifically built to offer a relaxing and scenic ride that would appeal to groups of all ages. Trains run on most days from Easter to October.

The 40 minute run behind one of the quaint narrow gauge steam engines, amidst the glorious scenery of Snowdonia, is already popular with many tour operators who are working to tight schedules. There is a large free coach park, cafeteria, souvenir shop and toilets with disabled access.

If time is not at so much of a premium, there is plenty more of interest within the Country Park. The nearby Welsh Slate Museum captures the atmosphere of a bygone age with its gigantic waterwheel and live demonstrations of the quarrymen's skills.

There are nature trails and woodland walks for the more adventurous, picnic sites and a range of fascinating craft workshops.

For further details and special group rates contact: Bruce Yarborough, Commercial Manager, Tel: (0286) 870549.



abandoned line in the Wye Valley. It was dismantled and moved piece by piece to be lovingly restored and re-erected to provide waiting room, shop and display room at the railway's Welshpool terminus. An exhibition here tells the story of the Railway.

From Welshpool (Raven Square) station, this scenic narrow gauge line leaves by means of steep incline, with a fifty minute journey along a winding route through unspoilt countryside to Llanfair Caereinion. At this terminus, visitors can inspect the spare locomotives, buy souvenirs, partake of light refreshments or explore the riverside walks. Hostelries nearby provide meals and accommodation.

Steam locomotives from three continents work the trains. Locomotive no. 10 "Sir Drefaldwyn" was re-commissioned last year after a major four-year overhaul. This impressively powerful narrow gauge locomotive was built in France in 1944 for the German Military Railways. A British built engine (no. 14) which used to work in West Africa has

been rebuilt in recent months and is due to re-enter service in pristine condition. Even the coaches have an international flavour. The end-balcony Austrian coaches, now almost a hundred years old, are particularly popular with visitors while there are slightly more luxurious saloon coaches rescued from the last train to run on the Sierra Leone railway.

There is ample parking for coaches at both termini. The Welshpool & Llanfair Railway welcomes parties by pre-arrangement and can offer reserved accommodation on scheduled trains or even special trains including evening dining trains and photographic specials.

While ideal for a day excursion, tours of Wales can feature a visit to the Railway as an exhilarating introduction to the Principality or as a memorable finale.

Generous discounts on the normal fares can be offered. **Further details from Llanfair Station, Welshpool, Powys - telephone 0938-810441.**

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

In Mid Wales there is a unique Edwardian hill climbing railway which offers a nostalgic trip behind vintage steam engines in picturesque surroundings. With a terminus in the attractive market town of Welshpool, it is easy to reach using the new expressways from North West England or fast roads and motorways from the

West Midlands while it can be readily approached from the west coast along the A458 main road.

This is the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway which has just completed the erection of an attractive "new" station building at Welshpool (Raven Square). In fact, this is a quaint 130 year old station rescued from an



ANGLESEY NEWS

The Bulkely Hotel

THE Bulkely Hotel is the premier hotel on the Isle of Anglesey and is situated on the shores of the Menai Straits with panoramic views over the Snowdonia National Park. Housed within a Grade 1 listed building, the hotel exudes the luxurious elegance of the Georgian era whilst offering all that is best in modern comfort.

The hotel has 43 en-suite bedrooms which ensures that we can accommodate a full coach party. On arrival at the hotel our reception staff board the coach to welcome the guests and once settled into the hotel, guests are given a talk detailing the history of the hotel, briefly explaining in the enclosed leaflet, followed by a light and sound show which describes the history of Anglesey from the Ice Age to the present day.

We pride ourselves in advising all group and coach tour guests that they are treated as any other private guest in the hotel, without any discrimination in the restaurant with regards to the menu and seating arrangements. Each evening meal is accompanied by our Resident Pianist providing light entertainment.

For further details - telephone (0248) 810415.

Oriel Ynys Mon

THIS purpose built heritage/arts centre in the heart of Anglesey was opened by her Majesty the Queen on 25 October, 1991.

This brand new all weather tourism facility, partly funded by the Ynys Mon Borough Council and the European Regional Development Fund is an exciting new venture which shows the history of the Island and its treasures in a spacious and comfortable setting. Large parties can easily be accommodated and there is ample parking for coaches, a pleasant cafe, two

major exhibition galleries, inner courtyard, picnic facilities, a well stocked shop and an interesting exhibition programme for 1992 which features amongst other things the collection of the internationally renowned wildlife artist Charles Tunnicliffe.

The building is fully accessible to the disabled and has only a small admission charge. An ideal place to leave groups to be entertained while the organiser/driver relaxes.

For further details - telephone (0248) 724444.

James Pringle Weavers

EXCITING new developments are taking place at James Pringle Weavers of Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwym drobwllantysiliogogogoch. These include the upgrading of various areas and the introduction of many new lines both to the clothing range and the Welsh Craft Centre.

This will mean more choice for customers and more benefits for

members of the GRAMPIAN TOUR OPERATORS EXECUTIVE CLUB.

For further information please contact:

Jill Anker, James Pringle Weavers of Llanfairpwll, Llanfairpwll Station, Holyhead Road, Anglesey, Gwynedd LL61 SUJ.
Tel No 0248 717171
Fax No 0248 713110

Plas Newydd Anglesey

AT Plas Newydd, a National Trust property on Anglesey, it is the gardens that have had the special treatment. A new fountain and pool have been created on the elegant terraced garden overlooking the Menai Strait. Particularly renowned for its spring shrubs - Rhododendrons, Camellias and Azaleas - the house and garden, tea room and shop is well worth a visit.

For further details please contact: The National Trust, Trinity Square, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 2DE. Tel- (0492) 860123.

Beaumaris Gaol & Court - Beaumaris, Anglesey

THE Gaol, built in 1829, is a grim reminder of the harshness of justice in Victorian Britain. Visitors can see various cells including the gloomy and dark punishment cell and the cell in which the condemned man spent his last few hours. You can retrace the condemned man's final walk to the scaffold and view the door to the scaffold and the execution bell. The treadwheel is unique as it's the only one still in its original location to be seen in Britain. The worst punishment in the Gaol was 6 hours a day working the treadmill, which was like a continually moving staircase.

Visitors will also discover the prison laundry, male and female workrooms, the prison yard, the infirmary where Bridget Reilly's baby died of convulsions, and the whipping room - all brought to life through the medium of Time Machine's Walkman tape guide available in Welsh and English.

There are also exhibitions on nineteenth century prison life and

a collection of police memorabilia on display.

The Court was originally built in 1614 and renovated in the nineteenth century and is a unique survivor of a Dickensian, Victorian Court. From here the guilty were taken to Beaumaris Gaol. You too can stand in the dock from which the prisoners found guilty of murder received the death sentence. Walkmans are available here too and relate to genuine court cases.

Both locations are open Easter, weekends in May, end May - end September, Daily 11-6.

Other times by appointment.

Toilets are available at the Court and on the first floor of the Gaol.

Limited access for those in wheelchairs.

Car & coach parking near the Court, 5 minutes walk to the Gaol.

The Gaol shop sells books and souvenirs.

Beaumaris has numerous cafes, restaurants, hotels, pubs and shops.

1992 PRICES

	Gaol	Court	Joint
Adults	£2.20	£1.30	£2.70
Children/OAP	£1.50	£1.00	£2.00
Family (2 adults & any number of children)			£6.50

GROUP REDUCTIONS

Group of between 10 - 20 = 10% discount
Group of over 20 = 20% discount

CONTACT MR. E. THOMAS (0248) 750262 ext 269.
SCHOOLS. (0286) 679090/1

Museum of Childhood



FURTHER away on Anglesey coach parties can also visit the Museum of Childhood at Beaumaris, chosen as the Star choice by the Sunday Express magazine in their "1001 Days Out 1990" feature.

Just across from Beaumaris Castle, and owned by Robert and Joan Brown, the Museum has a collection of toys, games, models, dolls etc. housed in nine rooms.

For further details - telephone (0248) 712498

Teddy Bears on display in the childrens room.



CLWYD NEWS

Heritage breaks in the Welsh Borderlands

THE Clywedog Valley lying just outside Wrexham opened in 1991. It comprises seven key attractions which tell the story of the area's social and industrial past, set against a backdrop of rich countryside.

It makes an ideal day out or a super heritage break with accommodation in one of the Welsh Borderlands' elegant country house Hotels.
For further details contact: Tourism Section, Dep.CM, Guildhall, Wrexham, Clwyd LL11 1AY.

Abbey Farm Greenfield Valley Heritage Park

ABBEY Farm Museum is set in a picturesque 70 acre country park close to the town of Holywell. A day in Greenfield Valley offers enjoyment for all ages. You can explore the museum exhibits and experience life in the 17th century by visiting Pentre Farmhouse. Nearby the tranquil 12th century ruins of Basingwerk Abbey are of historical importance and further up the valley the Holy Shrine of St. Winifrides is worthy of a special visit. It was here Prince Tewyth's daughter, Winifride was beheaded by a tempestuous chieftain. A spring of water is said to have erupted where her head fell, she was raised to life and the legend of the Well with wondrous healing powers was born.

Write and ask for the Summer Events Programme at Abbey Farm. Most weekends, traditional rural skills are demonstrated. The wheelwright can be seen repairing the farm cart. Often there is an opportunity for visitors to try their hand at traditional skills such as dry stone walling, stick dressing and even sheep shearing.

Abbey Farm Museum is open daily from April until the end of October. Special arrangements for groups or schools can be made by contacting Helen Gilliland, Visitor Services Assistant (0352 714172).

The farm is easily found by following the Heritage park signs from the A55 North Wales Expressway.

ECTARC

TAKE a trip round Europe with a visit to ECTARC - The European Centre for Traditional and Regional Cultures.

ECTARC is situated in Llangollen, a small rural town of 3,500 inhabitants clustered around the banks of the River Dee in West Wales, steeped in myth and legend and famous as the

home of the International Eisteddfod.

At ECTARC we can offer the visitor a wide range of European exhibitions reflecting different aspects of the cultures of Europe. There is a European craft and book shop, and full programme of performing arts events including folk, classical and theatre productions.

For further details - telephone (0978) 861514.

Llangollen Wharf

LLANGOLLEN Wharf is certainly the place to visit this year.

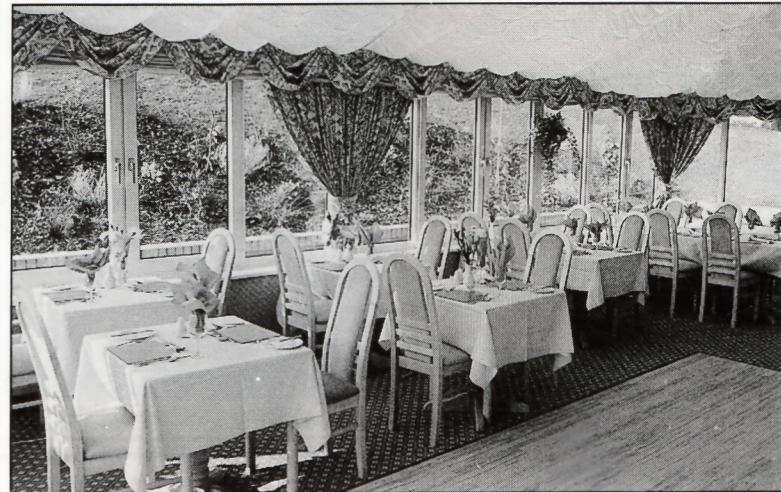
In addition to the well-known Horse-Drawn Boats, there will be the Thomas Telford, a newly-commissioned 70-foot narrowboat, which will carry 50+ passengers in centrally-heated, air-conditioned comfort on journeys which will cross the famous Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

Whatever the weather, passenger comfort is assured.

Then there's the increasingly popular Step Back in Time package designed for coach parties - at £7.50 for a Smithy visit, lunch and a boat trip, it's an economical day out.

For these and other packages in Llangollen and Border country, ring Peter Jones on (069175) 322.

The Autolodge Hotel



The Autolodge hotel.

THE continuing success story of the Autolodge Hotel, which started its business operations just over a year ago at Northop Hall, Clywyd, was highlighted again before Christmas.

A la carte, and table d'hôte menus created by Russell, the Chef at the Hotel, give patrons the widest choice of gourmet delights.

Another feature of the Conservatory is the dance floor for groups that require Live Musical

Entertainment or Discos for their Dinner Dance.

The Autolodge is privately owned, and is run as a family business. Personal attention to guests is therefore of prime importance, and this, in addition to its many attributes, is the main reason for its continuing success story.

For further information contact Malcolm Davies - telephone (0244) 550011.

Afonwen Craft & Antique Centre

AFONWEN Craft and Antique Centre at Afonwen, Near Mold, was a paper manufacturing factory, parts of which date back to 1786. It then became a leather works and then a Tweed Mill until July 1990 before the building was transformed into various Craft Workshops and Studios with a Restaurant.

Occupants at the Centre are Wendy Murray of Wendy Elizabeth Design Jewellery; Unique Florals, who manufacture porcelain flowers and high quality dried flower arrangements; Ann Foster of Pretty Things who designs individual satin motifs, fashion lingerie & nightwear; Yvonne Carter of Yvonne Carter Illustrations; and Mr and Mrs McBryde of P & S Glass who manufacture high quality stained glass, clocks, lamps and mirrors, many of which are commissioned work.

As and When Antiques displays a wide range of antiques and collectables to meet all demands. Also Barry Young's

Select Collections features antique and modern prints, framed and unframed. We also have a quality craft shop which boasts the majority of crafted items from North Wales, and all from within the U.K. We have showroom facilities and space for art classes, exhibitions and conferences.

The Restaurant seats 54 and throughout the Summer, as it has an adjacent pretty courtyard by the River Wheeler, there is additional seating for a further 30 people. We are closed every Monday, excepting Bank Holidays. Opening times throughout the Summer are 9.30 to 6.30 and this includes the Restaurant, which makes an ideal place to stop at any time of the day, by prior arrangement with Janet Monshin on the Restaurant telephone number on 0352 720 797.

Located five miles off the A55 junction facilities for coaches are by arrangement, with easy access for all ages.

For further details - telephone (0352) 720965.



CLWYD NEWS

Chirk Castle / Erddig Hall

THE 1992 season sees some new exciting developments at National Trust Properties in North Wales.

Top of the list is the King's Bedroom at Chirk Castle where visitors can see, for the first time, the bedroom in which Charles I really slept in 1645 during the Civil War. The magnificent border castle has been lived in continuously by the Myddleton family for 400 years right up to the present day, and there is a special exhibition of historical documents relating to the family on display for the first time this year.

Just 15 minutes up the A463 is Erddig Hall, Wrexham which tells the whole Upstairs Downstairs history of this fine country house.

This year the curiously named "Skeleton Boot Victoria" carriage will be on display for the first time - following a careful conversion project throughout 1991. The skeleton boot describes the luggage space under the coachman's seat and, of course, the graceful carriage is named after Queen Victoria. The licensed restaurant at Erddig offers waitress service and hot meals.

For further details contact: The National Trust, Trinity Square, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 4DE. Tel: (0492) 860123

The Wynnstay**Arms Hotel**

LOCATED in the centre of Wrexham, the Wynnstay Arms Hotel is only 12 miles from Chester and 10 miles from Llangollen.

The Hotel is a three star, 76 bedroomed hotel which has two bars and a restaurant which serves both a la carte and table d'hôte menus during the evening or a carvery at lunchtime.

Also an ideal lunchtime stop if your group is touring the surrounding area.

For further details - telephone (0978) 291010.



Bodelwyddan Castle ideal stop on the A55 North Wales expressway.

CARDIFF NEWS**Cardiff Tops "Most Reasonable City" survey**

THE bottom line price of a tour or day visit, can make or break a good idea. Everyone is looking for value for money and expects to get it, and let's face it, there is plenty of competition.

This is where Cardiff can help! Not only is it the Capital City of magical Wales and only half an hour from the Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale, but it is Britain's premier shopping centre and officially, the most reasonable.

In a recent survey of 17 cities worldwide, Cardiff came out "Tops" for value. What better reason could you have for using it? Don't tell me! Ease of entry etc.! Cardiff has consulted with members of the Guild of British Coach Operators on what is needed by a coach company coming into the city, with the result that Cardiff now has dedicated set-down and pick-up points and a brand new overnight coach park on stream for 1992.

For further information - telephone (0222) 395173.

Bodelwyddan Castle

GOOD news for coach operators! From 1 April, coaches travelling along the A55 North Wales expressway will be able to enjoy stops in the beautiful surroundings of Bodelwyddan Castle. Coach groups who have pre-booked morning coffee, lunch or afternoon tea will have free access to the Castle gardens and can enjoy the main attractions - a walled garden, woodland walk and children's play areas.

For further details contact Melanie Luke - telephone (0745) 584060.



Cardiff City Centre tops for value.

National Sports Centre for Wales

THE National Sports Centre for Wales is situated in the centre of Cardiff, within the beautiful parkland of Sophia Gardens. Travel and access to the Centre is excellent by road on the M4, or by Intercity rail.

Accommodation is available for 63 persons in recently refurbished rooms, all with en-suite facilities.

The National Sports Centre for Wales is the premier sporting venue in Wales, with extensive indoor and outdoor specialist

facilities, including badminton and squash courts, swimming pool, health suite and tennis courts.

The sporting facilities are complemented by supporting services such as bar, cafeteria and dining room.

Considerable use is made of the National Sports Centre by non-sporting groups who are visiting the area and need comfortable, inexpensive accommodation in convivial surroundings.

Further details - telephone (0222) 397571.



The Lovespoon Gallery.

hundreds.

Your itinerary for visiting the Welsh Capital must include the chance to see this wonderful collection of genuine lovespoons showing the work of more than thirty carvers at the Lovespoon Gallery.

At the Lovespoon Gallery your tour can be sure of a warm

The Lovespoon Gallery

THE Lovespoon Gallery has the largest display of handcarved lovespoons anywhere and it is so conveniently sited near the Angel Hotel in Castle Street, Cardiff.

This uniquely Welsh tradition dates back to the 17th Century and

beyond.

It has a wide appeal to visitors who can choose a beautiful and traditionally handcarved gift or memento of their visit from a simple miniature to an intricate design with prices from £2 to many



welcome.

A short talk on "The story of the Welsh Lovespoon" is easily arranged and we will be pleased to help plan this into your itinerary along with pre-visit information.

The Lovespoon Gallery is open Monday to Saturday from 10am (including Bank Holidays). Other Group visiting times can be arranged.

Please contact Mrs Pat Price on (0222) 231742 or write to her at the Lovespoon Gallery, 25 Castle Street, Cardiff CF1 2BT.
Mrs Price also has "The Lovespoon Gallery" at Mumbles in Swansea, and Carmarthen.

Celtic Bay Hotel

SITUATED minutes from the city centre at Cardiff, the Celtic Bay Hotel is located near the waterside in the heart of the prestigious Cardiff Bay

Development area.

The Hotel is ideally placed for group business having standardised rooms, each with en-suite facilities, hairdryer, television, trouser press and direct dial telephone.

The hotel boasts on-site car park, with a large lobby area ideal

for group check-ins.

Our rates for 1992 are amongst the most competitive in Cardiff and due to a refurbishment we now have extra twins available for Garden Festival dates.

Contact Jeff Roberts for a competitive quote - telephone (0222) 465888.

Cardiff Moat Hotel

THE Cardiff Moat House will shortly be ready to resume its position in the spotlight as Cardiff's premiere Conference and Banqueting venue.

The Cardiff Moat House adjacent to the M4 and only 4 miles from Cardiff has 135 newly refurbished bedrooms which include 2 suites, 8 ladies rooms and 14 executive rooms. All have en-suite facilities, television with video and satellite channels, tea and coffee making facilities, hair dryer, trouser press and 24 hour

room service.

With the emphasis on service and attention to detail, you can be sure that your expectations will be realised.

**For further information please call us now on 0222 732520
 The Cardiff Moat House, Circle Way East, Llanedeyrn, Cardiff CF3 7XF.**

HOTEL NEWS

The Riverside Hotel Monmouth

SET in the historic town of Monmouth nearby the famous 13th century fortified gatehouse over the River Monnow, the Riverside Hotel is within easy reach of all the local beauty spots of the Wye Valley and beyond.

All seventeen en-suite bedrooms at the Riverside Hotel have recently been refurbished to an extremely high standard offering the latest modern amenities including hairdryers, beverage making facilities and complimentary satellite film channels on the colour television sets. Four family rooms, a honeymoon suite and a room for the disabled are also available. Cots for our smaller visitors are free of charge and there is also a baby listening service.

The tropical atmosphere of the new Conservatory/Lounge provides a peaceful retreat for residents of the hotel and the Long Bar will tempt you with a wide choice of carefully prepared home-cooked meals and a well stocked bar including traditional ales and malt whiskies.

"Lady Hamilton's Restaurant" offers an a la carte menu cooked to perfection using flair, imagination and the highest quality fresh local produce. This year the restaurant has achieved many accolades including a rosette from the "A.A.", highly commended from "A Taste of Wales" and an entry into the Michelin Guide.

Personally run by the owners and their friendly staff, great care is taken to ensure that high standards of hospitality are achieved. So whether you stay on business or for pleasure, you will be sure of a warm welcome, a high degree of comfort and value for money.

For further details - telephone (0600) 715577.

Hafod Arms Hotel

THE Hafod Arms Hotel built over two hundred years ago by Thomas Johnes to enjoy exclusive views of the Mynach Gorge and Rheidol Falls. Thomas Johnes owned much of the surrounding countryside his estate covering thousands of acres. His Hafod mansion three miles away no longer exists but restoration of the Gardens enables present day visitors to enjoy the delights of the past. Guests were entertained at the hotel by firework displays of Bengal Lights illuminating the waterfalls which were viewed

from the hotel terrace.

Many famous people including the poet Coleridge have stayed at the hotel. An added attraction for country lovers and birdwatchers are the siting of the now rare Red Kite often seen from the hotel's terraced grounds.

The large well appointed tea room can cater for up to 100 people providing homemade lunch and refreshments including traditional Welsh Fare.

The hotel following recent restoration, offers comfortable accommodation for up to 40



Stakis Cardiff-Newport

CLOSE to the M4, Junction 24, Stakis Cardiff Country Court is an ideal touring base for Wales. 141 luxurious bedrooms, thirty per cent larger than the U.K. standard, all with king size beds; a stylish a la carte restaurant and cocktail bar; fully equipped health and leisure centre including 18-metre indoor pool, sauna, solarium and gymnasium; a purpose-built self-contained business centre with full office support; and a beautiful landscaped courtyard.

For the groups, Stakis Cardiff-Newport has some very attractive rates with many special offers

available. These rates are valid for numbers of 20 or more and start at £32.00 per person DBB sharing a twin room. All rates are negotiable.

Stakis Cardiff-Newport Country Court boasts an ideal location, being close to Brecon Beacons National Park and this year's Garden Festival in Wales, as well as being only one hour's drive from Bath and twenty minutes from Tintern Abbey.

Call direct for reservations on (0633) 413737 or Central Reservations (Groups) on (0345) 090505.

residents and meals may be taken in the hotel restaurant with private Cocktail Bar. Mini Conferences can be catered for in the Belvedere Suite. A fine range of beers, wines and spirits are available in the Three Bridges Bar. There is a private car park and special parking facilities for

coaches.

The hotel is under private ownership and the resident proprietors are always pleased to welcome parties visiting the hotel where the comfort of guests is of paramount importance.

For further details - telephone (097085) 232.



HOTEL NEWS

Inter Hotels

Lovespoons to Agatha Christie

SKI/SWIM breaks, Agatha Christie Mysteries, trips to Ireland and the Carving of your own Lovespoons are all available from Inter-Hotels in Wales.

Inter-Hotels, a consortium of independent hotels throughout Britain, has ten four crown hotels in Wales. Group tariffs are available and special interest programmes and itineraries can be arranged.

After extensive refurbishment, last August saw the re-opening of Inter's George IV Hotel in Criccieth. This Hotel is ideal for a winter break as many first class attractions are open (e.g. Criccieth Castle, Portmeirion, Power of Wales, Ffestiniog Railway, including "Santa Specials", Llechwedd Slate Caverns etc.). The hotel can arrange in house entertainment. Pre and post Christmas packages are available and prices are extremely competitive.

In Llandudno, the Risboro Hotel are having a hugely successful season with Coach Operators. The Hotel has a magnificent indoor swimming pool and gym and their Ski/Swim breaks are becoming increasingly popular with groups. Dancing and Cabaret in the hotel's air conditioned ballroom can be provided. A full size snooker table, table tennis, golf and bubbly breaks are also available.

In Beaumaris on the lovely Isle of Anglesey, lies the Henllys Hall Hotel; a country manor built in 1853. The hotel is well known for their speciality Agatha Christie Murder Weekends, that can be arranged for groups at anytime (prices on request). The hotel is set in 40 acres of woodland and features an international restaurant, sauna, jacuzzi, gym, sunbeds and outdoor heated pool. Welsh Love-in breaks and two-centre holidays to Ireland can also be arranged.

In the very heart of North Wales at the foot of Snowdonia itself, the Royal Victoria Hotel (116 rooms) lies between the twin lakes, Padern and Peris in Llanberis. Few places in the world can rival this location boasting breathtaking scenery that is steeped in a wealth of history. Very competitive group prices are on offer and the hotel has a varied activity and entertainment programme including dancing, male voice choirs and a harpist.

Superbly situated above the shores of Pembroke Haven with its panorama of shipping, lies the 3 Star Cleddaua Bridge Hotel. Within easy reach of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The Park provides a wealth of activities in a locality steeped in history. At the hotel every guest is offered a very high standard of accommodation and service. There is a heated outdoor swimming pool surrounded by a large patio area which is ideal for barbecues. Trips to Ireland can be arranged with overnight stays.

In Saundersfoot, at St. Brides Hotel you will discover one of Wales' loveliest resort hotels. Activities that can be arranged include golf, fishing, cycling, walking, horse riding and the carving of your own love spoons. The hotel has 45 bedrooms and a restaurant with a breathtaking view overlooking Saundersfoot's harbour and golden sands.

Several hotels are located close to the National Garden Festival and some group accommodation is still available. Prices range from £29.00 per person Half Board. The hotels are the recently refurbished Royal Gwent (formerly the Cwmbran Centre) the Newport Lodge Hotel, Newport and the Caer Beris Manor Hotel in Builth Wells.

Ebbw Vale is 30 minutes drive from the Royal Gwent Hotel in Cwmbran. The hotel can provide entertainment or an evening can be enjoyed at the Savvas Cabaret Club, one of Wales' premier nightspots. The hotel caters for the disabled and there is ample Coach Parking.

Inter's newest member the 3 Star Newport Lodge Hotel, Newport provides another excellent base for trips to Cardiff (12 miles) and the National Garden Festival.

In Builth Wells the Caer Beris Manor in the heart of Wales, is ideal for touring all parts of Wales including the Garden Festival, Brecon Beacons and Elan Valley. Special interest holidays include bird watching, golf, fishing, shooting and walking. The hotel has a varied entertainment programme and can arrange lunches, teas and dinners for up to 150.

All Inter-Hotels in Wales welcome groups for morning coffee and Welsh cakes, lunches and teas. In the heart of Clwyd the Bryn Awel Hotel makes an ideal lunch stop before a visit to the historic city of Chester.

For further information, brochures and prices please contact - Felicity Lewis, Inter Hotels, 2 Cromwell Park, Chipping Norton, Oxon, OX7 5SR - Telephone 0608 642211 or Fax 0608 642264.

The Dragon Montgomery

17th Century family run coaching inn set in the lee of historic Montgomery Castle. All diners swim FREE in the indoor heated pool. Tea/coffee, licensed bar, a la

carte restaurant and 15 en-suite rooms.

For further details - telephone (0686) 668359.

Pontins opens New Sands Chalet Hotel in Prestatyn, North Wales

WARM and wonderful Wales has always been popular with Pontins, so they decided to offer a different kind of holiday, one with all the added comfort and personal service that only their Chalet Hotels can give your clients.

They will get the best of all worlds because, as Sands guests, they can also take full advantage of the wonderful entertainment and sports facilities at the nearby Prestatyn Sands Holiday Centre.

The Sands is ideally situated for touring North Wales. Contrast the spectacular grandeur of Snowdonia National Park with the seaside excitement of Rhyl or Prestatyn. A magical history tour uncovers 17th century Bodryddan Hall and the mediaeval remains of Rhuddlan Castle, both near Rhyl.

When they return, guests can relax in newly furnished en-suite double or twin rooms in the main

building or family chalets, just across the road. The hotel has a new leisure complex, including indoor pool, sauna, spa bath and solarium, friendly bars and a selection of sporting leisure activities.

Clients will also be able to enjoy all the razzle dazzle of nearby Prestatyn Sands Holiday Centre's bars and nightclubs or, a more relaxed dinner in the Sands Hotel restaurant followed by dancing to the resident duo.

The Sands Chalet Hotel which offers half-board (table service) arrangements, will open at 1601 hours on Saturday 23rd May.

Holiday Clubs Pontin's will be happy to discuss group rates and arrangements with coach operators. The contact is Harold Burke, Group Tours and Sales Manager on 0257 452452.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT



Llanerch Vineyard

LLANERCH Vineyard in the Vale of Glamorgan is the largest commercial vineyard in Wales and the only Welsh vineyard to produce estate bottled wines from its own grapes under the CARIAD label.

We are very happy to accept Coach groups by appointment and provide a guided tour of the vineyard and winery and a tasting of our wines and cider for a charge of £3.50 per person. There is no charge for the guide and/or driver. The tour can take from 45 minutes to 1 1/2 hours depending on the interest shown by the party and the questions generated.

A light lunch or supper can be provided for up to 45 persons for an all-in price of £9.50.

Coffee, teas and light refreshments are available from the visitor centre as are purchases of wine and souvenirs.

In addition to the vineyard there are 10 acres of woodlands and lakes for walks and picnics and there is a small children's play area.

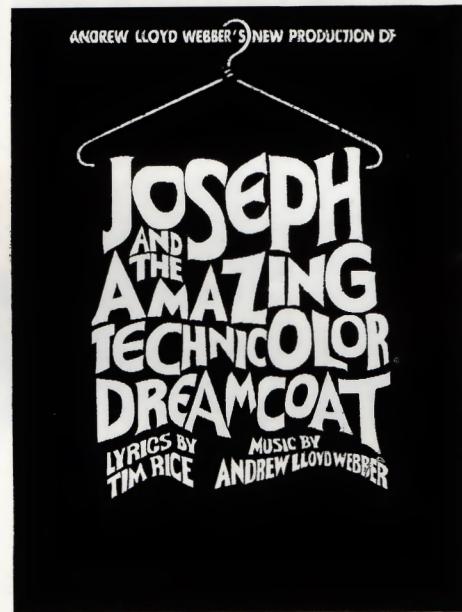
For further information and booking details please contact Christine Searle or Peter Andrews at the vineyard on 0443 225877. Llanerch Vineyard, Hensol, Pendoylan, Vale of Glamorgan CF7 8JU



WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT...
The following two shows are now available through Applause for
groups of 10 or more at ... FACE VALUE

Just to make that perfectly clear...

NO BOOKING FEE



For DATES AND PRICES call: 071-831 2771

For THE COMPLETE BOOKING SERVICE call: 071-831 2771

For ALL YOUR THEATRE REQUIREMENTS call: 071-831 2771

"TOE-TAPPING FUN FOR EVERYONE"

"DANCE, SONG AND LASHINGS OF ENTERTAINMENT"

**"TOMMY STEELE... BRIMS WITH WINNING CONFIDENCE,
AGELESSLY SPARKY AND TRIM"**

**"RIGHT FROM CURTAIN UP THIS SCORCHER OF A SHOW
SIZZLES WITH ZIP, ZING AND PIZAZZ"**

"CAREFREE, JOYFUL SHOW"

**"ANYONE WHO LIKES SPECTACLE AND SHEER
ENTERTAINMENT SHOULD BOOK IMMEDIATELY"**

"ENJOY A MUSICAL? YOU'LL LOVE THIS"

"PACKED WITH RAZZMATAZZ FROM CURTAIN UP TO THE GRAND FINALE"

"A STAGE SMASH"

"GOOD ROUSING TUNES, EXCELLENT PERFORMANCES"

**"BOB MERRILL AND JULES STYNE HAVE COME UP WITH ANOTHER
BATCH OF TOE-TAPPING TUNES WITH CLEVER LYRICS"**

TOMMY STEELE in SOME LIKE IT HOT



**PRINCE EDWARD
THEATRE**

OLD COMPTON STREET LONDON W1 071-734 8951
cc FIRST CALL (24 HOURS, 7 DAYS, NO BKG FEE)
071-836 3464 / 071-379 4444 (NO BKG FEE)
GROUPS 071-240 7941 and at all Keith Prowse shops

PHONE NOW · NO BOOKING FEE
FIRST CALL
071-836 3464
24HR CREDIT CARD SERVICE

COACH TOURS & EXCURSIONS

Better advertising means better image

NEW SALES are 20 percent product and 80 percent image... so said one marketing man who clearly had a vested interest in promoting his own profession.

But he was closer to the truth than many operators realise. Projecting your business image is easily as important as keeping the wheels turning. Advertising is just one aspect of the face of marketing, but one in which fortunes can be made or lost depending on the image the advert portrays.

These days, advertising is not just a question of listing your wares. It's a way in which you can not only give your prices but also give the prospective customer a taste of what he or she can expect to pay for. It's the image you portray which will determine whether the client pays your price, not the price itself.

Examples of this can be found throughout advertising. The commonest substance on earth - water - can even be sold if the advertising is right. Look at Perrier's incredible success in selling what amounts to soda water for premium prices which its competitors do not even attempt to match. Perrier is just water, but its advertising image is of chic, sophisticated and healthy people.

Buy a packet of washing powder and you are probably paying as much for the advertising and marketing than you are for the contents of the box. It hasn't stopped Lever becoming one of the country's most successful detergent manufacturers.

Examples in coaching

One of the only ways to spread the word when selling a new tour or excursion is to advertise. But not all advertising is good, and this week, Coach Tours & Excursions takes a look at the ways coach operators can make the best of this season's advertising cash.

aren't hard to find. Wallace Arnold's dominance in the travel agents and elsewhere is partly due to the company's size, buying power, nationwide coverage and its product. But a large part of its success comes from the expert way in which it handles its marketing and advertising, from its full colour brochures to its national advertising campaigns. There are great many small coach companies which can match the product but few who can match the image. The result is that Wallace Arnold, Shearings and the like can sell tours when others are struggling.

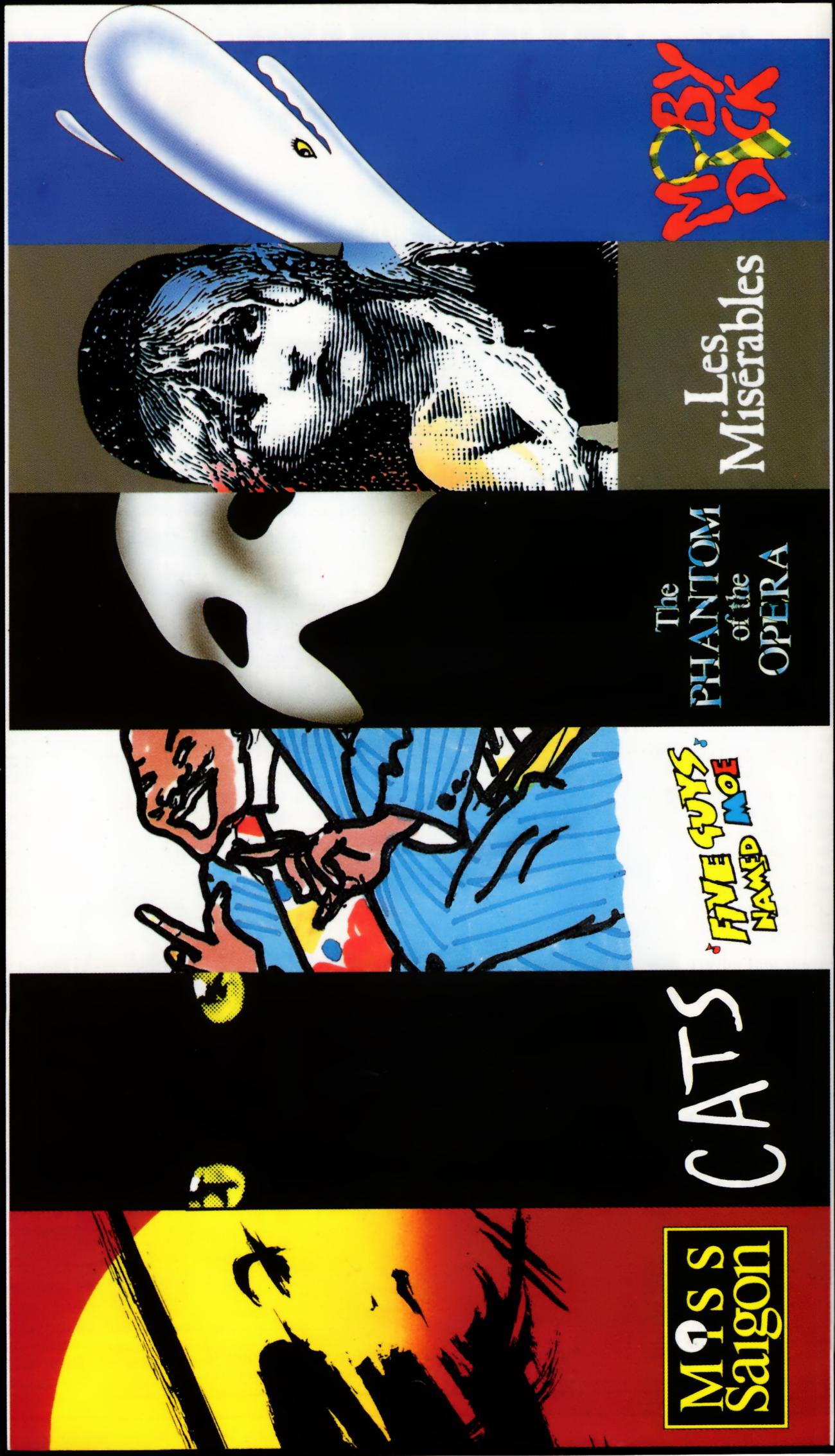
Of course, operators do not have to afford the advertising and marketing costs borne by WA. As a local service, smaller operators need only strive to get good, blanket coverage of a much smaller area. The home truth is that it isn't the amount you spend but what you spend it on which determines whether your advertising is cost-effective.

Most operators by now have a shrewd idea of the advertising media which produce the best results for them. It's important to stick with newspapers, radio stations or other media which have given good value for money. It's equally important to constantly reassess where your advertising money goes, to haggle prices with rival media and to now and then take a step back and rethink the very basics of how you sell your image and your tours. Make time for these functions and they will help you make money.



Pictures like this are effective at selling products.... and are often distributed free by an attraction

YOU DESERVE SIX OF THE BEST!



Contact: Tel. 071-405 1567 or 071-494 5454

Adverts...the good, the bad and the ugly

THE importance of good advertising design cannot be too highly stated. There is a real cash difference between the good, the bad and the ugly.

The first rule is 'Keep it Simple.' Avoid cramming small spaces with hundreds of words and figures. It's confusing to read, ugly to look at, and some old people may not be physically able to see the type.

What was the biggest type on your last advert? In many adverts, it would be the family name of your firm. Is this really the main sales pitch? Is your name so well-known and trusted that its appearance alone will achieve sales? It's possible, but you should always give the biggest prominence to the points which will sell your tour.

You have to assume that the attention span of readers is only a few seconds as they browse

through the newspaper or magazine. The first word they read will hopefully persuade them to read the next, then the next paragraph. You cannot assume that they will read every word.

Lift your advertising by giving readers a focal point which draws their eye and their attention. This can be done with key words - so-called buzzwords like 'value', 'door-to-door', and 'friendly' may be appropriate to your tours, and say so much more than 'Smiths Coach Tours.'

Of course your low price is an important sales pitch. But it is nowhere near as important as telling the customer what good value the tour is going to be. There's a fine line between 'good value' and 'cheap' and if you overstep it, you are depressing the standard of customer and the profit margin.

Giving an image of the destination in a small space is not easy, but, as the old adage goes, pictures speak louder than words. Photos and line drawings can be begged and borrowed from tourist offices, hotels and elsewhere. Use them in your advertising.

Take this even further by lending your drivers a simple camera and a film, so the coach can be shown outside the hotel or at the destination. Don't laugh... it's cheaper than buying pictures from agencies, and the results may be more appropriate.

The biggest mistake made by advertisers is trying to sell every product in one ad and, as a consequence, selling none. Base the advert on one or two products, sell them well, and the rest of your programme will slot in nicely behind this success. It may be useful to list other tours in a panel

at the bottom of your main ad.

Under no circumstances try to hide the fact that you are selling coach tours. Make the coach one of your selling points. Amplify the good side, and you will automatically diminish the bad. For instance, you cannot hope to be faster than air or car travel. So show how leisurely your tour will be; sell relaxation.

Very few new advertisements are new ideas. Most designers 'borrow' from each other, so don't be afraid to crib simple concepts. Take a look at the adverts which attracted your attention and work out what grabbed you.

We have given a few examples of basic designs which can be adapted to suit. The newspaper, magazine or other media will produce the final artwork. All you need do is prepare a rough sketch of the advert as you would like to see it, and ask to see proofs before it goes in. The advertising department will almost certainly adjust your design to make it practical, but you should get roughly what you want.

Beautiful Bavaria



From your doorstep to the heart of Germany for just £350!

We stay at four-star hotels throughout our tour, with three days of coach touring and half board accommodation included in the price.

ABC Coaches, Any Farm Drive
Anytown, Tel 01234 456789, Fax: 012345

Scotland

Where can you watch the leaping salmon, toss the caber, eat Haggis and wear a kilt?
We've given a couple of clues on this advertisement.

Of course, you may be simply choose to lounge in our reclining seats and take in the best scenery in the UK, getting back to our luxury, four star hotel just in time for wild smoked salmon and Boeuf en croute...

Ten days' top-quality touring, with skilled couriers, half board, for just £350. Reserve your seat NOW with

ABC Coaches, Any Farm Drive
Anytown, Tel 01234 456789, Fax: 012345

Sit Back... Relax... And enjoy...



The beautiful Irish countryside as we take you on a journey through time to a place where the meaning of leisure and courtesy have not been forgotten...

Five days of luxury for just £220

Travelling in our luxury, toiletted coach from your doorstep to a top-class County Kerry hotel. All travel and meals included.

ABC Coaches

Any Farm Drive

Anytown, Tel 01234 456789, Fax: 012345

Here are a few examples of the way in which even simple type can be made to stand out in a crowd of advertisements. Standing the type on its end can draw the eye. Using the right type - the 'buzz' words - also means the effective message gets across quickly. Company names are so rarely important. Even giant car companies slip the name along the bottom line and make the hard sell with the picture. The Bavarian ad shows how a simple picture or line drawing - obtained free from the tourist board or taken by a driver - can tell the story better than the words. Mention of other tours run by your company can be slipped in unobtrusively at the bottom of the advert, and will take their place as the main cant of the ad when their time comes.

Mark Furness & John Newman for Barry O'Brien (1968) present
by arrangement with Stoll Moss Theatres

"TREVOR NUNN'S SUPERB PRODUCTION" Guardian

The Blue Angel

A MUSICAL PLAY BY
PAM GEMS

based on the novel by **HEINRICH MANN**
with **KELLY HUNTER** **PHILIP MADOC**

"VIBRANT THEATRICALITY" Jack Tinker, Daily Mail

"THE PHYSICAL IMPACT OF
NUNN'S PRODUCTION IS TERRIFIC...
A SEDUCTIVE, FEROCIOUSLY ACCOMPLISHED,
HIGH-ENERGY SHOW" Irving Wardle, Independent on Sunday

PREVIEWS FROM MAY 7 • OPENS MAY 20

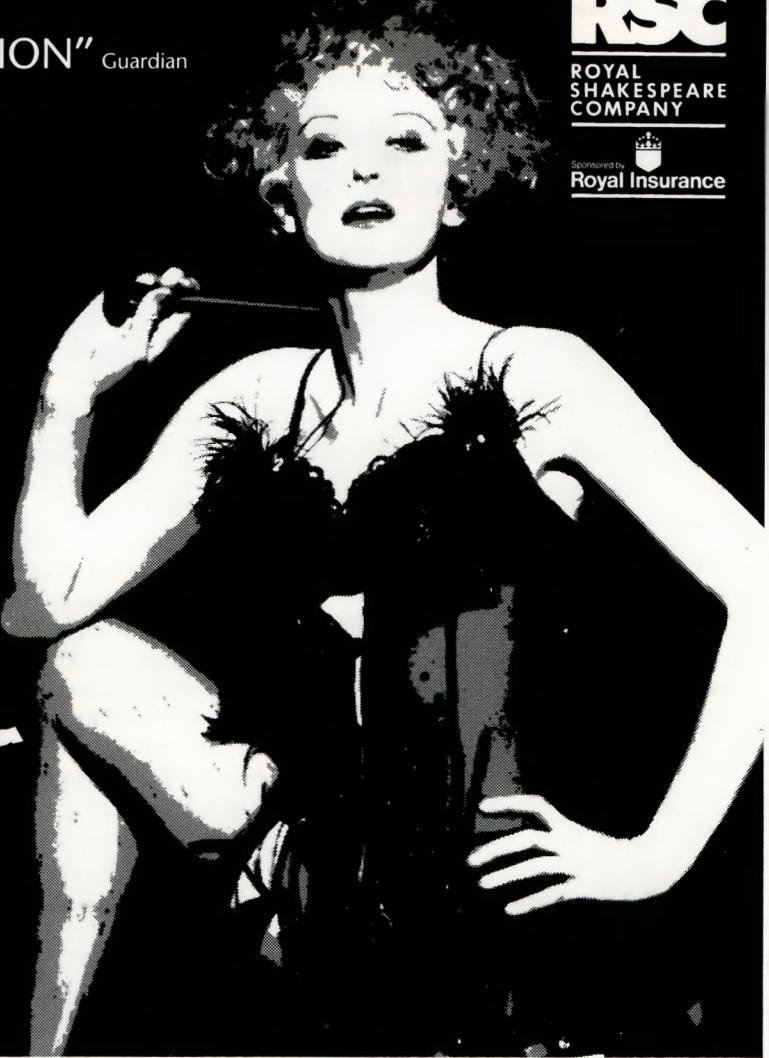
THE GLOBE THEATRE

A Stoll Moss Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2

Box Office 071- 494 5454

REDUCED RATE FOR GROUPS OF 15 OR MORE
(excluding Friday & Saturday evenings.)

"FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN"



PARIS & EURODISNEYLAND® THEME PARK

Special Offer to Coach Operators

Continental Connection are pleased to announce that we are able to offer a range of weekend breaks and longer holidays to **Paris** and **Euro Disneyland**, including ferry crossings and hotels, for departures from June onwards. Whatever your itinerary and budget, we can offer you a complete package to suit your needs. We have packages available all year round — *Including high season in July and August* — and we can supply entrance tickets to **Euro Disneyland Theme Park** with entry guaranteed, and colour brochures for your clients, approved by Disney. We recommend you place your reservations as soon as possible as space is sure to be claimed quickly.

- ★ Tailor-made itineraries
- ★ Free quotations
- ★ Professional service
- ★ Expert guides
- ★ Coach & air holidays
- ★ Weekend breaks
- ★ Exotic holidays
- ★ Special events
- ★ Over 50 destinations

Continental Connection Ltd
The Old School, 122 Church Rd, Buckley,
Clwyd CH7 3JN

... so make the CONNECTION now on 0244-541313

RSC
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
Sponsored by
Royal Insurance

Cost your advert campaigns with care

ALL too often, the cash to pay for advertising a tour comes out of the profit from the last one.

The result is that a healthy income from one good idea or product could be drained by another which has little public appeal. Costs for each tour can be reassessed on a day-to-day basis but the value of giving each tour a set advertising cost is that any losses promoting an unpopular product are kept within acceptable limits.

To properly assess the REAL cost of any tour, and thus the profit, advertising should be attributed to the budgeted spend on each. The key word is budget - promotion must be added to the list of costs which includes driver's wages and fuel.

There is a natural temptation to bolster up flagging bookings for a tour by spending money on promotion. If the alternative is to lose a deposit, add that to your list of options... it may be the cheapest way out. If any additional promotion was required for a new tour, it should have been costed in at the planning stage. A rescue might be possible with extra promotion, but often it's better to stick with low booking levels. At least the clients aboard will feel pampered, and may come back. Cancel the tour and you may disenchant them.

Many operators use their existing client list effectively enough to be able to rely on repeat bookings for the majority of their business. But while no-one can deny the importance of customer loyalty, increased sampling of the product is the lifeblood of expansion or even to maintain booking levels. Limited success will be achieved launching

something new to an old audience. Some form of advertising is the only way to get outside of an existing pool of 'regulars.'

A seven to ten-day tour departure should have a budget of at least £250 spent on promotion. Ideally, an extra £10 or more a head (giving a minimum budget of £350 to £500) should be built into the retail tour price for promotion. Some of this budget will be spent on the annual tour brochure and regular mailshots (costs split between all the tours) but there should be a sum left over to give to additional promotion when a tour is particularly hard to shift.

Many operators will baulk at the thought of trying to outsell a competitor's tour, having already loaded their own retail price by at least £10 additional cost. Bear in mind those detergent companies before deciding promotional costs are a write-off. The ultimate aim is to raise your product above your competitor's, not drag it down to his level by selling on price alone.

So you've booked your advertising space or air time. What next? The design of your advertisement will have as much influence on the decision to buy as the words which appear. It may make a great deal of sense to employ a skilled graphic designer. The difference in the quality of your advertising will be obvious.

You get what you pay for in all walks of life, and graphic design is no different. Not every company is expensive and you can cut your



Getting your image over isn't all illusion... if your staff are winners, like this Coach Driver of the Year, say so!

cloth according to your budget. It may well be prudent to stick with a local company so that you get plenty of opportunity to see the work as it progresses.

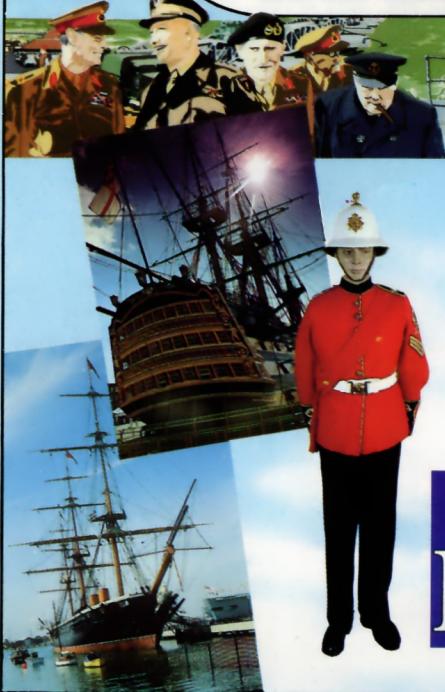
Not every budget will stretch

to a graphic designer, so we have given a few examples of advertising design, later in this feature, which may help with DIY attempts, and a rough guide to basic ad design principles.



Portsmouth

Flagship of Maritime England



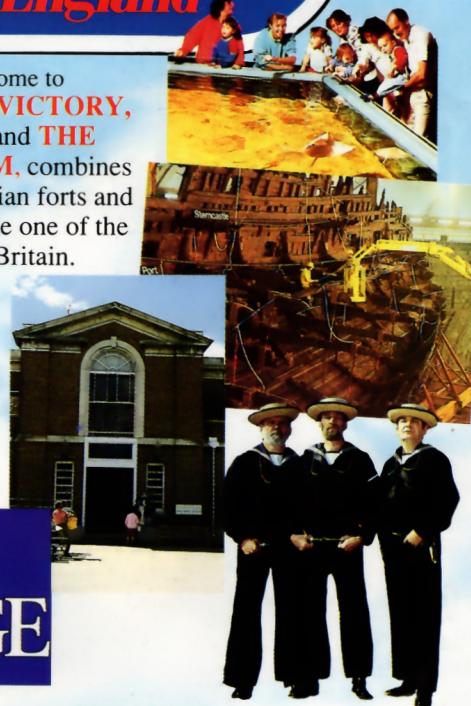
The Historic Dockyard home to
**THE MARY ROSE, HMS VICTORY,
 HMS WARRIOR 1860 and THE
 ROYAL NAVAL MUSEUM**, combines
 with medieval castles, Victorian forts and
 prestigious museums to create one of the
 best heritage centres in Britain.

For **FREE** information, details
 of group rates and assistance in
 organising your tour
 contact:

John Gibbs, Portsmouth
 Tourism (Dept MO), Civic
 Offices, Portsmouth PO1 2BG
 ENGLAND

Tel: 0705 834086 Fax: 0705 828441

**NAVAL
 HERITAGE**
 AT PORTSMOUTH



WESTERN THEME PARK
 •MORECAMBE•

M6 EXIT 34

£7.50 NOW ONLY

£5.99

For unlimited rides

Over 30 Great Rides
 two Live Shows,
 Indoor Fun House,
 Shops and Catering Outlets.

Good Parking Facilities.

Phone (0524) 410024

FOR FURTHER DETAILS

SKEGNESS

MABLETHORPE
 WOODHALL SPA
 TENNYSON COUNTRY

Within the magical district of
 East Lindsey in Lincolnshire

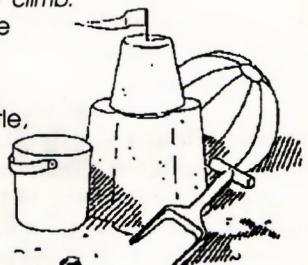
Lincolnshire's "family" seaside resorts of Skegness and Mablethorpe are great for a "Value for Money" day out, or week away, with miles of sand, sea . . . afternoon tea and lots of things to do and see.

Our SENIOR CITIZEN friends love them because there are no hills to climb.

Discover the beautiful countryside where Alfred, Lord Tennyson was born & wrote many of his poems. Visit the picturesque market towns of Alford, Horncastle, Louth & Spilsby or lovely Woodhall Spa set amidst pine and birch woods.

At Skegness there is a new coach park and drivers' rest room.

For you FREE 1992/3 Travel Trade Manual and East Lindsey Tourism Package write or ring



Room CBW, East Lindsey Tourism
 The Embassy Centre, Grand Parade, Skegness, Lincs PE25 2UP
 Tel. Skegness (0754) 767820/764821

APOTENTIAL to achieve a far better public image at low cost exists... and it's often called public relations.

In fact, PR is everything you do, sell and every advert you place because it is the whole of your public image. But generally, PR is taken to mean every piece of publicity you achieve outside of the accepted sphere of marketing.

You have sold 35 seats on a tour but you give away two to local newspaper journalists, with a view to them writing a short feature. That is PR. Or you offer two places as prizes to local old folk's homes. That is PR.

You help promote the BCC's Bus Code at your local school. You donate cash to a local charity. All of these things are PR, even if your time or money was given selflessly. The object of the exercise is to promote your image to the public at large, and to do this you must reach the right people.

Clearly it pays to be in touch with local organisations and the

Don't let PR let you down

local media. Be selective in who you choose to help publicise your PR exercises, and pay a compliment by telling them you have singled them out.

Never forget that the press are targeted by hundreds of PR exercises every week. They cannot give space to every one. Two policies are likely to give yours a chance of success; persistence and honesty. Don't give up and don't, under any circumstances, tell lies.

Sponsorship, charity work and many other public exercises are an important part of PR, and should not be ignored as viable ways to establish a good image in the local community.

One south coast bus company has made itself a name locally by

doing surveys of its passengers and reporting the results to the local and even national media. Maybe there is mileage in handing out questionnaires on the last day of tours - offer a small prize draw to encourage a good response - and using the information not only to improve your own image, but to adjust future tours AND to supply the results to the Press. Clearly you'll need to avoid releasing all your best tips to the competition, but if 99 percent of your customers have a good time, let everyone know.

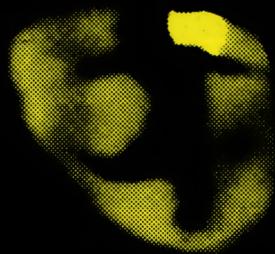
Inevitably, PR will also include the occasion when one of your tours goes wrong. When the reporter rings you with the awkward customer complaint,

view it as an opportunity to communicate. Tell the reporter you would like to comment but you would like 30 minutes to jot down some details. Promise to ring back.

Contact the complainant and check the facts. If Mrs X has a point (never capitulate when it is not necessary), apologise and find out what will smooth things over. When you 'phone the reporter give him the full facts and ask him to personally pass on your offer to the client. If you don't encourage the reporter to ring the complainant again, all of the 'quotes' from Mrs X will be negative.

The Bus and Coach Council has a 'crisis' service for its members. If you are a member, use it. The BCC has a wide experience of dealing with the Press and can take a pro-active role not only in protecting the image of your company, but helping coaching in general to avoid unnecessary criticism. ➤

NOW AND FOREVER



CATS

SPECIAL SHOW SAVER OFFER

RING DEBBIE ON 071-405 1567 OR FAX 071-831 5487

COACH CRUISE TO THE

ISLE OF
WIGHT

Red Funnel have just launched their 'Group Day Trip' brochure for coach operators. Phone now for your **FREE** copy. We are open seven days a week to take your booking



SOUTHAMPTON
330333
 **RED FUNNEL**
ISLE OF WIGHT FERRIES
Choice, Service & Reliability

YOU are cordially invited to

GREAT YARMOUTH

as guests of the

GREAT YARMOUTH & DISTRICT
PUBLICITY ASSOCIATION

to a **Fact Finding Tour** of the tremendous attractions and facilities available for holidays and excursions throughout the **Great Yarmouth area** for your clients during 1993 and beyond!

The tour will take place on
Tues. & Wed., 2nd/3rd June 1992

Accommodation will be provided at **our expense** and the **fact finding tour** will be **fully escorted** throughout. You are assured of a useful, informative visit and a **Great time in Great Yarmouth.**

To reserve your places and for more information on this tour please contact:

Gary Baker, Dept. Gt. Yarmouth Publicity,
c/o Potters, Coast Road, Hopton-on-Sea,
Gt. Yarmouth, NR30 9BX
or telephone (0502) 730345
or fax (0502) 731970

STOP OFF IN *Stafford*

JUNCTION 14 on the M6

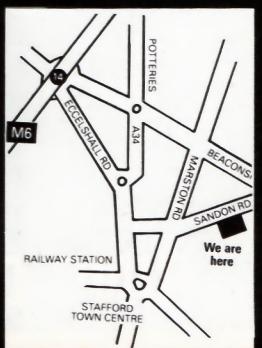


Well sited just over a mile from Junction 14 on the M6 you'll find the Lotus Factory Shop in the factory grounds offering an exciting range of ladies and gents shoes at discount prices. There's easy parking for coaches and a gentle ramp to the shop entrance. Friendly staff will be delighted to welcome you, so break your journey and call manageress Pat Cryer on 0785 223200 or write to the address below.

* Special offer to on tour organizer/coach driver*

Lotus
FACTORY SHOP

Freemen Street off Sandon Road
Stafford ST16 3JA



Cut costs, not corners

WHEN costs are rising and profit margins narrowing, the temptation is to cut 'non-essential' costs - and advertising budgets are often the first to go. However, independent research shows that by advertising throughout a recession, you can emerge stronger than competitors who don't.

So what to do when money is tight? The answer is to ensure that advertising spend is as effective as possible - achieving the results you want. Good advertising does two things; it promotes corporate awareness, bringing long-term business; and it provides direct response from potential customers. Decide which is most important to you and design your advertisement accordingly.

However, an advertisement, no

matter how expensive, creative or clever, will not work unless you define exactly who you want to reach with it. Identify a potential customer base and decide what is essential to them, e.g. value for money, an unusual venue or attraction, something different to offer which your competitors can't? Picking a publication with the right readership is the first step.

When designing advertisements there are basic rules to remember. Your competitors will also be advertising - so ensure you gain the attention and interest of the reader immediately - an advertisement must have impact to stand out from the crowd.

Good copy, use of visuals, colour, or special position can achieve this. Also potential

customers want to know that other people have used your service and been satisfied - use testimonials, pictures of other people visiting your venue etc.

Timing and scheduling also make the difference between good and poor response. Regular, planned advertising, in the right publications, gives better results. As far as cost is concerned, most magazines will offer discounts for scheduled, pre-planned advertising. It can often be more effective and cheaper to take a smaller advertisement regularly than, say, a full page less frequently.

Decide what you want; continual market awareness; or to sell a particular package? Discuss this with the advertising sales person. It is their job to advise you.

A professional advertising sales person will find out what you want, and tell you the way to get best value for money. Find out whether there are any relevant advertising or editorial features running and advertise around them. The heightened awareness created by editorial features often increases response levels.

And remember - it is about selling yourself, company and service. No-one can guarantee quality response. You can, however, increase the chances by picking a publication which goes straight to your customer base, with quality editorial which they read.

Decide what you have to offer that is different or better and tell as many people as possible... by advertising.

SENSATIONAL 'LATE AVAILABILITY' SUPER SAVER BREAKS AT THE BEACH HOTEL, MINEHEAD

16th May 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £17.00pppn.
23rd May 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £18.00pppn.
20th June 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £21.00pppn.
22nd August 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £23.00pppn.
29th August 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £21.00pppn.

THE STRAND HOTEL, BUDE, CORNWALL

16th May 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £17.00pppn.
23rd May 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £18.00pppn.
28th July 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £22.00pppn.
29th August 1992 x 7 nights x 44pax x £21.00pppn.

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BTTF: Buyers did more business

NEC show beats record

THE British Travel Trade Fair attracted more than 2,000 group travel buyers and saw trading reach several million pounds.

Wallace Arnold's buying team signed contracts worth almost £34 million during the show, trading with 14 hotel exhibitors over the two days.

The BTTF's success is underlined by a 25 percent rise in attendance compared to MOOT '91. Biggest growth was in the number of coach and tour operators, with more than 1,000 seeing the show.

More than 100 travel agents and almost 200 overseas buyers visited the 330 exhibitors from

England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"We did three times more business than at last year's MOOT," said Francis Crawley of Hampton Court Flower Show. "We sold a great many tickets for the show and made many new and valuable contacts."

Dates for next year's BTTF are March 31 and April 1, again at the NEC.

Discussions are still underway with other BTA members to decide whether it will, once again, have representation from Northern Ireland and Wales, and whether the Scotland Tourist Board will back the show.

Show clients Whipsnade on TV

A VIDEO about Whipsnade Wild Animal Park is available on free loan to operators promoting trips to the venue.

The half-hour film takes potential clients on a tour of the Bedfordshire park - now burgeoning with former London Zoo animals - and tells the story of the zoo. The rest of Whipsnade's

promotional and marketing package on offer to operators includes leaflets and posters.

 To get a copy of the video, a £5 returnable deposit should be sent to Caroline Boys, Whipsnade Marketing Dept, Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, Dunstable, Beds LU6 2LF, Tel: 0582 872171.

Farthing en route

FARTHING Services on the M2 was one of the benefactors of EuroDisney's opening day, April 12, when a staggering 1,055 coaches pulled in. In addition to the usual facilities at a motorway services, Farthing Corner has a Bureau de Change, toilet drop and Sealink booking office on site. Pictured right, Farthing Corner's general manager Peter Angelides bids coach passengers a safe journey.



Easter ferry crossings at all-time high

FERRY companies are reporting huge increases in coach traffic over Easter, with P & O European clocking up its 3 millionth passenger a fortnight ahead of 1991.

EuroDisney is claimed to have had an effect on P & O's figures - as a result of its Preferred Travel Partner status. P & O says the demand has been so great it has had to add a further 25 percent more accommodation in EuroDisney hotels this summer.

Coach carryings were 22 percent up - 3,800 vehicles over the Easter weekend against last year's 3,100 - most using the short-sea crossing to France from Dover. Already, P & O is claiming it is on target for a second record-breaking year.

"It's a very rough estimate, but we guess that around 14,000 passengers were destined for EuroDisney," said a spokesman for P & O.

The biggest growth on the P & O routes was the 50 percent change to Boulogne passenger levels reported, attributed to the closure of Sealink Stena's Boulogne crossing this year. But Dover-Ostend and Dover-Calais both saw passenger level increases of around 20 percent.

■ At North Sea Ferries, the summer promises to fill the vessels to capacity in a similar pattern to last year's.

"We are on target to beat the record we set last year," said a spokesman. "We have never experienced such high demand. Floriade and EuroDisney could have some bearing, giving us group bookings up around 20 percent for the summer. In the first three months of the year, coach carryings were up ten percent."

The spokesman said operators and car drivers would be unlikely to find a space aboard peak-season ferries this year.

■ Eurotunnel is denying that it is considering another rights issue to cover increasing costs of commissioning the new cross-channel route.

The Times newspaper said the company was playing down the speculation that it will be looking for more cash when its 1991 results are announced, and again next year, around the time that the tunnel opens.

Lost revenue from the delays in opening the tunnel have narrowed the difference between the cost and the £8.9 billion funding.

Dover top port

PORT of Dover enjoyed the Easter boom, setting a new record with 4,300 coaches passing through in five days.

The success story for coaches is better than in any other sector. The figure is 34 percent higher than last year's, while car traffic remained relatively static. Passenger numbers rose 22 percent over Easter '91... itself a new record.

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- ★ MORNING COFFEE AND AFTERNOON LUNCHES AVAILABLE FOR YOUR DAY TOURS ★ (PRIOR BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL)
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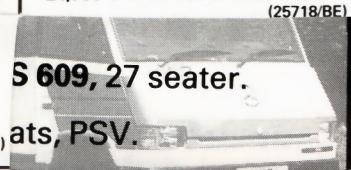
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(25696/BE)

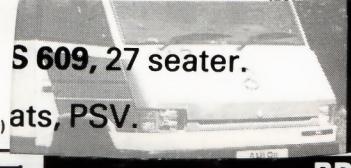
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1980 Bedford YMT Caetano Alpha, white with blue stripes, 53 re-upholstered seats, curtains, recent engine rebuilt, new clutch and gearbox, 6 months test, £5,000 + VAT. Tel. (0905) 58529 (Worcester). (25706/BE)

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1978 YMT/ PLAXTON SUPREME, 53 seats, all white, private plates, MoT May 1993. 1979 YMT/ PLAXTON SUPREME, 53 seats, all white, private plates, MoT February 1993. Tappins Coaches, Didcot, tel. 0235 511115. (25391/BE)

1980 YMT Duple, 53 retrimmed seats, good condition, Telma, we have owned this vehicle since 1981, FSH, MoT till 28/11/92, £4,750 + VAT. Tel. 071 739 5454. (25718/BE)



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FAX: 031 335 3158 (25717/SC)

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(0260) 276067 (25575/VO)

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1981 VOLVO B58 Irizar Exec, white with blue stripes, 12 months test, 49 reclining seats, tints, curtains, toilet, water boiler, wired and boxed for TV/video, two tables, carpets, private plates, recent new clutch and short engine, £15,000 + VAT. Tel. (0905) 58529. (25705/VO)

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M-2-M

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87 TRANSIT 12, LWB, diesel, front entrance.

87 IVECO 18 seat, power door.

87 TRANSIT 12, LWB, PSV tested.

87 (E) FREIGHT ROVER, Dagenham, 16 dsl.

87 TRANSIT Petrol, 12, PSV, SWB.

87 MERCEDES 609, 26 chs seats, tested.

87 MERCEDES 814D, 29 seats, boot, coach spec, new test.

86 OPTARE Cub, 33 seats service spec.

86 MERCEDES 608D, 21 luxury, tested.

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86 IVECO CAETANO 24, air door, service.

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85 LEYLAND DOYEN, full spec, new test.

85 C MERCEDES 0303 Executive, 49/53.

84 MCW DD Cummins, 73 seats, testing.

84 NEOPAN MERC 75 seat, full spec, tested, V10 man box.

84 MAN VAN HOO, Astron, 57 seats, Executive, testing.

84 DAF MB200 Berthof Executive, tested.

83 DODGE R BURGESS, Diesel, auto, 17 F door.

83 TRANSIT 15 seat diesel, non PSV.

83 A MERCEDES 509, 19 seat, PSV.

82 B10 GOLDLINER, 53 recliners, tested.

82 Y DAF Jonckheere 2300, Exec, toilet, tested.

82 B10 GOLDLINER, 46, toilet, tested.

81 DAF 200 Exec, 48 + TV, Alpha, tested.

81 VOLVO B58, 53 large seats, Duple II, new test.

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80 VOLVO VIEWMASTER 53, tested.

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79 V FORD PLAXTON, 45 seats, Turbo, testing.

79 VOLVO SUPREME V, ZF, requires test, offers.

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79 FORD 63 Plaxton, testing. Offers.

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78 LEOPARD Duple Express, 48, tested.

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1986 (D) FREIGHT ROVER Carlyle Conversion, 16 seats, power door, 5 standees, destination gear, MoT March 1993.

1986 (D) IVECO 79/14 Caetano, 24 moquette bus seats, power door, MoT May 1993.

1986 (D) MERCEDES 608D, Alexander conversion, 21 seats, 6 standees, power door, new MoT.

1985 (B) LEYLAND TIGER CUB, Duple Dominant bus body, Allison automatic gearbox, 29 coach seats, 8 standees, choice of two, MoTs July 1992.

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1985 (B) VOLVO B10M, Plaxton Paramount 3500, 51 seats, toilet, ZF auto gearbox, MoT February 1993.

1984 (A) MAN SR280, 53 reclining seats, rear continental door, Webasto, power door, radio/PA, MoT February 1993.

1981 (X) BEDFORD YMP Plaxton Supreme IV, 10 metre, 45 seats, power door, MoT October 1992.

1979 (T) VOLVO Plaxton Supreme IV, 50 reclining seats, power door, Telma.

1977 (R) LEYLAND LEOPARD, Willowbrook body, 49 seats, semi-auto, power door, MoT June 1992.

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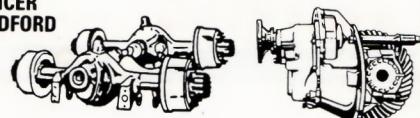
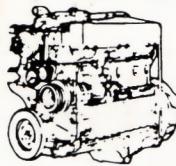
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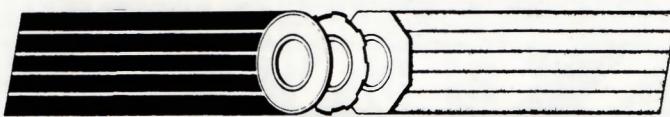
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MARKETING ASSISTANT

Edinburgh-based Salary circa £10k

Due to the expanding activities of Scottish Citylink Coaches and its holding company, a new post is being created in the Marketing Department. Reporting to the Marketing Manager, the postholder will be involved in some or all of the following activities, according to experience and aptitude:

- Market Analysis
- Timetable Compilation
- Leaflet & Brochure Production
- New Product Development

Applicants should have appropriate experience in the travel/leisure industry, a meticulous approach to their work and an understanding of marketing principles. The successful candidate is likely to have a degree or HND qualification and will have had practical experience of computer applications, particularly desk top publishing, spreadsheet and database applications:

A full CV together with a covering letter in your own hand should be sent to:

Mr D Dyson, Marketing Manager, Scottish Citylink Coaches Limited, Buchanan Bus Station, Kilmarnock Street, Glasgow G2 3NP
 to arrive not later than Friday 8th May 1992

(25509/APP)



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JANUARY 1991 - DECEMBER 1991

Results of tenders and quotations for the provision of local public transport services in Humbershire, are now available.

To obtain a free copy, please write to:

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Note: Bus and taxi operators who have expressed an interest in public transport contracts in Humbershire will receive copies of the results automatically.



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(28065/AUC)

New DSB sales manager at helm

ALAN Middleton has replaced Russell Moon as sales manager at DSB Sales, the Long Watton-based Dennis Javelin/Plaxton coach dealership.

DSB managing director, John Dunn, said: "We will be abstracting Alan's knowledge of Dennis and the Javelin to the full. He will be office based leaving me with more time out on the road

meeting customers."

The 37 year-old Mr Middleton moves from Yeates Bus & Coach where he was administration and contracts manager for six years. He was involved in the initial launch of the Javelin when Yeates held the Javelin franchise.

His predecessor, Mr Moon, is acting as an own-account freelance coach salesman.

WA director retires

Margaret Hook, a director of Barr and Wallace Arnold Trust for 45 years and daughter of founder, Robert Barr, has retired.

After war service as a staff captain in the ATS and a brief return to her pre-war profession as a journalist, she joined the group as tours director of Wallace Arnold to restart the British and continental inclusive tour

programmes after the war.

The group's tour programmes were completely revitalised under her control. Passenger carryings increased from around 2,000 pre-war to just short of 150,000 in 1980 when she retired as tours director. She continued to work for the group as chairman of Sibbald Travel and director in charge of the group's hotels.

Professor White joins Transport Studies Group

PETER White has been appointed professor within the Transport Studies Group of the Polytechnic of Central London.

Previously a senior lecturer, Professor White joins two other professors in the group: Peter Jones, director of the group from May 1 this year, and Mike Browne, BRS professor of transport.

Professor White continues to be responsible for postgraduate teaching and research in the field of public passenger transport - both road and rail. Current specific research interests include bus and coach safety, bus and coach deregulation and trip-chaining analysis of passenger demand.

Car dealer MP takes on London

FORMER car dealer, Steve Norris, has been appointed minister in charge of London's transport.

Mr Norris, 46, has responsibility for transport co-ordination in London, including Docklands, and specific responsibility for London buses and London Underground, and for

roads and traffic within the M25 circle, including red routes. Although it has not yet been officially acknowledged it is being generally assumed that he will also be charged with seeing through deregulation in London, as outlined in the Government's pre-election manifesto.

Mr Norris is known as an arch Euro-sceptic, with a deep distrust for anything coming out of Brussels, and is also regarded as distinctly wet. Although MP for Epping Forest, he comes from Liverpool. He went to school at the Liverpool Institute, but completed his education at Worcester College, Oxford.

He was re-elected to Parliament in a 1988 by-election, with a majority cut from 21,513 to 4,404 by protests at the start of the present recession. Mr Norris himself was personally affected by the economic downturn: he had to sell his car dealership.



Steven Norris

Sally gets new trainer

SALLY Ferries is hoping Sue Copper will get travel agents shipshape this summer.

The company's new retail trainer and merchandise co-ordinator will be making travel agents more aware of the services available and training them in sales techniques. Miss Copper joins Sally Ferries from Uniglobe

Travel of Luton, where she was business development manager. Before that, she worked for Britannia Airways.

"I have been looking for a move back into travel and sales development for some time, and the ferry business is an exciting industry to be involved in," said Miss Copper.



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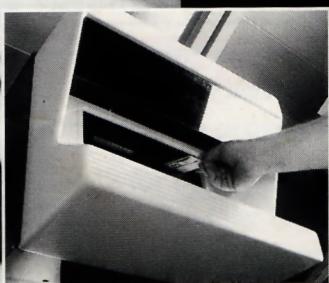
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